DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 415 084 RC 021 363

AUTHOR	Levin, Marjorie; Moss, Marc; Swartz, Janet; Khan, Sherry; Tarr, Hope
TITLE	National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program. Report on Even Start Projects for Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations.
INSTITUTION	Abt Associates, Inc., Bethesda, MD.; Fu Associates, Ltd.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC. Planning and Evaluation Service. Evaluation Service.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	76p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *American Indian Education; Cherokee (Tribe); Community Characteristics; *Delivery Systems; Early Childhood Education; *Family Literacy; Family Programs; Parent Education; *Program Evaluation; Reservation American Indians; Tribally Controlled Education; *Tribes
IDENTIFIERS	*Even Start; Makah (Tribe); Pascua Yaqui (Tribe); *Program Characteristics

ABSTRACT

The tribal Even Start program is one of the set-aside components of the U.S. Department of Education's Even Start Family Literacy Program. Even Start combines adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting education services for parents eligible for adult education and their children from birth to age 7. In 1994-95, nine Indian tribes and tribal organizations received direct federal grants to administer Even Start Projects. This report examines three of the projects: those administered by the Makah Tribe (Washington), the Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma), and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (Arizona). The following is covered for each project: community characteristics, recruitment of families, program staff, content and delivery of Even Start services, coordination of service components, and evaluation and the Even Start Information System (ESIS). The three projects each serve 20-27 families in primarily rural areas. Many core services are delivered during home visits. This may be the preferred mode of delivery for tribal projects, due to expansive catchment areas and lack of public transportation, and because participants and staff are often previously acquainted. Major issues and challenges confronting tribal projects are related to preserving tribal culture, encouraging parent involvement, poverty, unemployment, lack of facilities, and lack of culturally relevant materials. Appendix includes topic and observation guides for site visits. (Author/SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RC

RC

ED 415 084

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

REPORT ON EVEN START PROJECTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

1997

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Prepared by:

Marjorie Levin
Marc Moss
Janet Swartz
Abt Associates Inc.

Sherry Khan
Fu Associates, Ltd.

Hope Tarr
Consultant

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Education
Planning and Evaluation Service

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC 021363

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM: REPORT ON EVEN START PROJECTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

Abstract

The tribal Even Start program is one of the set aside components of the Department of Education-supported intergenerational literacy program. Even Start combines adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting education services for parents eligible for adult education and their children from birth through seven years old.

In program year 1994-95 nine Indian tribes and tribal organizations received direct federal grants to administer Even Start projects. Three of these projects were visited for this study. The goals of these visits and this report were to increase the knowledge base about the programs, to surface unique program management issues faced by the projects, to describe effective practices used by tribal projects, and to assess the appropriateness of the national evaluation data collection instruments and procedures for the tribal projects.

Geographic location, project organization, and special program features were used to select sites to visit. The sites chosen were: the Makah Tribe in Washington state in the northwest, the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma in the south central region of the country, and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Arizona from the southwest.

CONTENTS

		Page
Executive Summary		i
Chapter One	INTRODUCTION	1
	Tribal Even Start Program	1
	Demographics of American Indians	2
	Organization of the Report	4
Chapter Two	STUDY DESIGN	5
	Purpose of the Study	5
	Selection of Projects	5
	Approach to On-site Data Collection	6
Chapter Three	CHEROKEE NATION EVEN START PROJECT	7
	Introduction	7
	Characteristics of Community Served	7
	Recruitment of Families	10
	Staff	11
	Content and Delivery of Even Start Services	12
	Coordination of Service Components	16
	Participation and Follow-up Strategies	17
	Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)	17
	Conclusions and Lessons	18
Chapter Four	MAKAH EVEN START PROJECT	20
	Introduction	20
	Characteristics of Community Served	20
	Recruitment of Families	22
	Staff	23
	Content and Delivery of Even Start Services	25
	Coordination of Service Components	29
	Participation and Follow-up Strategies	30
	Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)	31
	Conclusions and Lessons	32
Chapter Five	PASCUA YAQUI EVEN START PROJECT	34
	Introduction	34
	Characteristics of Community Served	35
	Recruitment of Families	36
	Staff	37
	Content and Delivery of Even Start Services	38

CONTENTS
(Continued)

		Page
Chapter Five	PASCUA YAQUI EVEN START PROJECT (continued)	
	Coordination of Service Components	43
	Participation and Follow-up Strategies	44
	Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)	45
	Conclusions and Lessons	46
Chapter Six	EVALUATING TRIBAL EVEN START PROJECTS	48
	Local Evaluation Activities	48
	Appropriateness of the ESIS	48
Chapter Seven	SUMMARY OF PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TRIBAL EVEN START PROJECTS	50
	Introduction	50
	Summary of Three Tribal Even Start Projects	50
	Challenges and Responses	54
References		58
Appendix A	Topic Guide and Observation Guide for Tribal Even Start Site Visits	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary highlights information from the report on three tribal Even Start projects visited as part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program that Fu Associates, Ltd. and Abt Associates Inc. are conducting for the U.S. Department of Education. The report is intended to provide examples of service delivery models in a subset of tribal projects; generalizations about all tribal projects cannot be made on the basis of descriptions of only three projects.

This summary begins with information about the Even Start Program and the design of the study. Subsequent sections include brief descriptions of the three tribal projects visited, descriptions of their evaluation activities, and a discussion of the special challenges that American Indian communities and their Even Start projects face.

Tribal Even Start Program

The tribal Even Start program is one component of the Even Start Family Literacy Program that is designed to:

> ... help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program .... The program shall— (1) be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services; (2) promote achievement of the National Education Goals; and (3) assist children and adults from low-income families to achieve to challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards. (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201)

Even Start projects provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult basic skills training or secondary education, and parenting education. The program's design is based on the notion that these components build on each other and that families need to receive all three services, not just one or two, in order to effect lasting change and improve children's school success.

Even Start began as a demonstration program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, that provided school districts with four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. In 1992, most grant-making responsibilities were transferred to the states, although small set-asides for direct grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations, to migrant education projects, and to outlying areas remained (and still are) federally administered.

During the 1994-95 program year, nine American Indian tribes and tribal organizations received direct federal grants to administer Even Start projects: Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Covelo Indian Community Council, Southern Ute Community Action Program, Kickapoo Nation, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Cherokee Nation, Makah Tribe, Northwest Indian College, and Forest County Potawatomi.

Study Design and Purpose

In March 1994, the Planning and Evaluation Service in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a contract to Fu Associates, Ltd., with a subcontract to Abt Associates Inc., to design and implement the Even Start Information System (ESIS). One of the tasks of the Even Start evaluation is to conduct a special study of the tribal Even Start program. The main objectives of this study are to:

- increase the knowledge base about the tribal Even Start projects;
- identify unique program management issues that these projects face;
- describe instructional practices used by tribal projects; and
- assess the appropriateness of the ESIS forms and national evaluation procedures for the tribal projects.

The study design called for site visits to a subset of tribal Even Start projects. Criteria for selecting the projects included geographic location, project organization, number of sites within the project, and special features of the project. The following three projects were chosen for the site visits: the Makah Tribe in Washington; the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma; and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Arizona.

The site visits to the three projects took place between June and October of 1995 and were conducted by two-person teams comprised of one staff member each from Abt Associates and Fu Associates. The teams were on-site at each tribal Even Start project for approximately two days to interview staff and observe project activities.

Summaries of the Tribal Even Start Projects Visited

Brief descriptions of the three tribal Even Start projects visited are presented below.

Cherokee Nation Even Start Project

The Cherokee Nation Even Start Project is located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and is administered through the Tribal Services Department of the Cherokee Nation. The project

operates year-round and serves 20 families in two communities in northeastern Oklahoma: Tahlequah and Kenwood. Most Even Start families earn less than $10,000 a year; about 35 percent of participating families are headed by a single parent. In the two-parent households, most mothers stay at home full time.

Project staff include a project coordinator, an adult educator, an early childhood educator, and a full-time clerk-typist. The project is primarily home-based; early childhood and adult education services are delivered by a two-person team consisting of an adult educator and an early childhood educator who conduct weekly home visits. Parenting education is offered through monthly parent meetings which serve as social gatherings as well as forums for discussion on a variety of topics of interest to parents.

Makah Even Start Project

The Makah Even Start project is located in Neah Bay, Washington, and administered by the Makah Indian Tribe. The Makah Indian reservation encompasses 44 square miles of rural land on the northwest tip of the United States. The Even Start project provides services to 20 Makah families from September through June[1]. The majority of families participating in the Even Start program are two-parent families, ages 18 to 22. About 70 percent of the mothers are employed and about 50 percent of the parents have earned their high school diplomas.

Even Start staff include a director, a coordinator, two home visitors, and a half-time program assistant. Early childhood education and parenting education are provided primarily by the Even Start staff. Early childhood activities include weekly play groups in participants' homes or the local Head Start center as well as home visits every other week. Parenting education is provided during the home visits and at monthly parent meetings, and utilizes the Parents as Teachers and Positive Indian Parenting curricula. Adult education services, including GED classes, adult basic education, and computer instruction, are provided through the Makah Learning Center and by an instructor contracted from a local Indian college.

Pascua Yaqui Even Start Project

The Pascua Yaqui Even Start project is administered by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe based on a reservation southwest of Tucson, Arizona. The Even Start project operates from September through June and serves about 27 Yaqui families living on the reservation. During the summer, the project also operates a summer school for Even Start children and their siblings. About 75 percent of the families participating in the Even Start project are two-parent families. Approximately 80 percent of the Even Start fathers work, and about 50 percent of the mothers work either full- or part-time. About two-thirds of the parents have earned either a high school diploma or GED.

---

[1]The Even Start law was amended during reauthorization in 1994 to require program services to be delivered on a year-round basis, including some program services during the summer months. However, that change did not take effect until the 1995-96 program year.

Staffing for the project includes a project coordinator, three family education specialists, a part-time child care worker, and a project secretary. Early childhood and parenting education services are provided by the Even Start staff; adult education services, including adult basic education, GED and ESL classes are provided through a local community college and a local adult education agency. The project provides center-based early childhood classes three days a week for children three to five years old in addition to monthly home visits. Parenting education includes monthly parent meetings and monthly home visits.

Evaluating Tribal Even Start Projects

The amount and type of data collected for the local evaluations varies among these projects, depending upon each evaluator's plans for the local evaluation and his/her involvement with the project. Common methods used by the local evaluators to gather information about the projects include talking with staff and participants, conducting surveys with staff and participants, collecting attendance statistics, reviewing project records, observing project activities, and reading reports prepared by staff.

For the national evaluation, two of the three projects reported that they have been able to use the automated Even Start Information System (ESIS) successfully and have not had any problems using the software or fulfilling the national evaluation requirements. One project had technical problems with its computer, which have been corrected. Currently, the project staff, or in some cases the project director, collect all of the intake and participation data necessary for the national evaluation and record the information on the ESIS forms.

Overall, the project staff did not find that the ESIS items were inappropriate for the American Indian population, but they did have concerns that the national evaluation was not reflective of American Indian culture and values because the forms do not collect information about tribal affiliation or the prevalence of parents telling stories to their children.

Challenges Faced by Tribal Even Start Projects

This section summarizes the major issues and challenges confronting the American Indian communities and Even Start projects as reported by Even Start staff, as well as the strategies used in response to these challenges.

Preserving American Indian Culture

Project staff emphasize that American Indian culture is very rich in tradition, values, and spirituality. It has been a struggle to preserve this culture due to past government policies of assimilation and such practices as sending a previous generation of American Indians to federal boarding schools where, for instance, the use of tribal languages was discouraged and sometimes even prohibited. Compounding this problem is the perception that there is little recognition for

American Indian culture in the public schools, and further, that there is a lack of American Indian teachers in public schools as well as in Indian schools.

Tribal communities confront the challenges of preserving tribal culture by offering adult education classes on tribal history, culture, and language to community members. Several tribes also address this issue by collaborating with the local public school systems to develop bicultural programs and provide training on American Indian learning styles. Some successful strategies that Even Start projects have used to reintegrate American Indian culture into the lives of their families focus on incorporating tribal language and tradition into the early childhood classes and parent programs.

Encouraging Involvement in Educational Activities

One of the biggest challenges for many American Indians, as described by project staff, is overcoming isolation from the larger society, yet at the same time dealing with the influences and opposing cultural forces outside of the reservation. Project staff believe that all of these issues contribute to parents' reluctance to attend adult education classes, become involved in their children's schools, and spend more time in the outside community.

Tribal communities and Even Start projects use a variety of strategies and practices to help participants deal with cultural barriers, especially as these obstacles prevent their involvement in their children's education and participation in adult education classes. Practices used include: providing field trips into urban areas for families living on reservations or isolated areas; offering adult education classes for parents living on reservations; providing tribal employees with financial help and time off for educational purposes; providing advocacy for parents within their children's public schools; and encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's education.

Poverty and High Unemployment Rate

Extreme poverty and a high rate of unemployment are challenges for most American Indian communities and for many Even Start families. One contributing factor is the geographic isolation of many reservations, and the accompanying lack of employment opportunities that result from such isolation. Another challenge for tribal organizations is how to strike a balance between encouraging progress and economic diversity while maintaining the tribe's cultural identity and traditions.

The response of the Even Start projects to the extreme poverty and high unemployment rates within the American Indian community has been to encourage participants to pursue education and necessary training to obtain higher paying jobs. Some tribes have responded to this problem by developing or expanding gaming operations such as bingo parlors and casinos. These enterprises generate revenue for the tribes and provide employment for tribal members.

Adequate Space and Facilities for Even Start Services

Lack of sufficient space and facilities for project activities is a challenge for the tribal Even Start projects, as it is for many other Even Start projects. One project is limited in the number of families that can be served by the amount of space available. For another project, the lack of sufficient office space to accommodate all of the project staff in one location has limited staff communication and collaboration across program components.

There are no easy solutions to lack of space and facilities other than relocating, which two projects are planning to do. A current alternative being used is sharing space and facilities with other tribal or community programs such as Head Start.

Culturally Relevant Early Childhood Curriculum Materials

Project staff report a lack of commercially available American Indian early childhood curricula, books, toys, and education materials that are relevant to the American Indian culture. Staff also report that the limited American Indian education resources that are available focus on general Indian practices and culture and are not specific enough to their tribe.

Tribal Even Start project staff deal with the challenge of having limited culturally relevant education materials by revising and adapting materials to reflect their own Indian culture and, in some cases, the specific culture and language of their tribe. For tribes with a strong cadre of elders, this older generation serves as an important resource. Staff also feel that help from the Department of Education in curriculum design and resource materials would be useful.

Summary of Participant and Project Characteristics

This section provides a summary of key project and participant characteristics of the three projects visited. Common themes across the three projects are highlighted and, where possible, comparisons are made to Even Start projects nationally.

Participant Characteristics

Parents' education level among participants in these tribal projects tends to be higher than among Even Start projects nationally. Two of the three projects reported that 50 percent or more of their participants have a high school diploma or GED.

The employment status varies somewhat among the three projects but is still relatively high. The Pascua Yaqui and Makah tribes report employment rates between 70 and 80 percent for Even Start parents. Among the Cherokees, there is a 13 percent unemployment rate, suggesting that the majority of adults also are employed there. These figures contrast sharply with

the employment rate among Even Start projects nationally, where only 33 percent of parents are employed at the end of the project year.

Taken together, the higher than average employment rates and the higher proportion of adults with a high school diploma or GED among these Even Start projects have implications for program services. Some project staff indicated that parents are more interested in the parenting education component than the adult education services, and program services reflect this interest. Although the three projects provide adult education, parents' education level may explain why some staff from tribal projects report low participation in adult education services.

Project Characteristics

The three tribal projects serve between 20 and 27 families, which is a smaller number of families than the average among Even Start projects. Data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS) for the 1994-95 program year indicate that, on average, Even Start projects serve 62 families. One reason the tribal projects might serve fewer families than other Even Start projects is that the three projects serve primarily rural areas; among Even Start projects nationally, rural projects also tend to serve a smaller number of families than projects in urban or mixed communities. The Indian population also tends to be more self-contained, with less mobility and fewer new immigrants than other communities.

Many of the core services in early childhood education (ECE), parenting education, and adult education are provided during home visits in these three projects. ECE services are delivered solely during home visits in the project run by the Cherokee Nation; in the other two projects, ECE is provided through both home visits and center-based programs. Parenting education also is provided through a combination of home visits and monthly parent meetings. Adult education is provided primarily through home visits in the Even Start project run by the Cherokee Nation.

The expansive catchment areas and a lack of public transportation are two related reasons why home visits may be more appealing for Even Start projects on tribal lands. Thus, bringing project services to the families is more feasible than bringing parents and children together at a centralized location. In addition, some project staff reported that many American Indian parents are reluctant to travel off reservation to attend classes. The communities on the reservations and tribal lands also seem to be very close-knit. Project staff generally know the families prior to any involvement with Even Start, and most staff members share the same cultural heritage as the Even Start participants. Project staff reported that parents generally are very pleased to receive the individualized attention of a home visit. Thus, home visits may be the preferred mode of instruction for parents in the tribal projects.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a description of three Even Start projects operated by Indian tribes and tribal organizations. These projects were visited as part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program that Fu Associates, Ltd., and Abt Associates, Inc., are conducting for the U.S. Department of Education in order to learn more about the specific challenges and characteristics of tribal Even Start projects.

There is great variation across all Even Start projects nationally in service delivery models, and the tribal projects are no exception. Thus, information about three projects should not be used to generalize about all tribal Even Start projects. This report is meant to provide examples of service models offered and challenges faced by a subset of tribal projects, not to draw general conclusions about all projects.

Tribal Even Start Program

The tribal Even Start program is one component of the Even Start Family Literacy Program authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Part B of Chapter 1 of Title I, as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. In 1991, Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73) which amended the Even Start program. The Even Start program was reauthorized in 1994 by the Improving America's Schools Act[1]. The Even Start law also was amended in 1996 by the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-134). According to the 1994 legislation, the Even Start program is intended to:

> ... help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program .... The program shall— (1) be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services; (2) promote achievement of the National Education Goals; and (3) assist children and adults from low-income families to achieve to challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards. (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201)

[1]This report refers to the reauthorized law. Projects were not required to implement changes made by this law until program year 1995-96.

To be eligible for Even Start at the time of this study, a family must have had an adult who was eligible to participate in an adult education program under the Adult Education Act and a child less than eight years of age. Even Start projects must provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult basic skills training or secondary education, and parenting education. The program's design is based on the notion that these components build on each other and that families need to receive all three services, not just one or two, in order to effect lasting change and improve children's school success. Strong projects have attendance policies to ensure participation in all three components. Projects also are required to serve those families "most in need" of services on the basis of poverty, education level, and other need-related factors.

Even Start began as a demonstration program administered by the U.S. Department of Education that provided school districts with four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. In 1992, most grant-making responsibilities were transferred to the states, although small set-asides remained for direct federal grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations, to migrant education projects, and to the outlying areas. In 1994, as part of the reauthorization, Congress added two more small set-aside direct grant categories: (1) for a project in a prison that houses women and their preschool-aged children; and (2) for statewide family literacy initiatives.

During the 1994-95 program year, there were nine American Indian tribes and tribal organizations receiving direct federal grants to administer Even Start projects: Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Covelo Indian Community Council, Southern Ute Community Action Program, Kickapoo Nation, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Cherokee Nation, Makah Tribe, Northwest Indian College, and Forest County Potawatomi.[2]

Demographics of American Indians

To provide a context for the tribal Even Start program, we summarize below some of the current demographic characteristics of American Indians.

Education

Currently, American Indians have the lowest academic achievement level of any ethnic/racial group in the United States and have been the least successful academically of all minorities in the United States (Reeves, 1989). Slightly more than half of all American Indians complete high school, and American Indians have the highest dropout rate of any minority group in the United States (Hodgkinson, Outtz and Obarakpor, 1990; Russell, 1993).

---

[2]The majority of Indian families are enrolled in regular Even Start projects; only 26 percent of all American Indian families are served by the seven tribal projects that reported data in 1994-95 for the national evaluation.

Economics

Unemployment is a serious issue for the Indian community, especially for Indians living on or near reservations. There are simply not enough employment opportunities on or near most Indian reservations to provide support for the average Indian family. Unemployment rates on some reservations can be as high as 80 to 90 percent, and the number employed in some rural Indian communities is less than 10 percent (Urban Indian Education, 1990; Szasz, 1991).

The response to this level of unemployment, for many educated and uneducated Indians who are able to work, is to leave the reservation for employment opportunities. Unfortunately, this also means leaving strong family and cultural ties. The gaming industry (e.g., bingo halls, casinos), although controversial, has been a solution for some tribes and has brought much needed revenue to many Indian communities.

Health Care

Overall, the health status of American Indians in the United States is well below the national average. Although Indian infant mortality has been reduced significantly, gains in other areas have not been as consistent. Some statistics on Indian health issues are as follows:

- the overall rate of alcoholism among American Indians is two to three times the national average, alcohol mortality is ten times the rate for all other combined races, and fetal alcohol syndrome is 33 times higher (Russell, 1993; Szasz, 1991);
- diseases such as tuberculosis and diabetes are about seven times more prevalent among American Indians (Russell, 1993); and
- the suicide rate for American Indians is more than twice the rate for all other nonwhites, and one in six Indian adolescents has attempted suicide -- four times the rate of other teenagers (Hodgkinson et al., 1990; Russell, 1993).

Housing

Despite increased efforts of the federal government over the past 30 years to address Indian housing needs, the majority of American Indians in this country live in substandard housing (Nolan, 1992). Most Indian housing is provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through Public Housing Authorities established by Indian governments and authorized by the Housing Act of 1937. HUD provides operating subsidies to the Indian Housing Authorities to make up the difference between the rents collected and the actual cost of constructing and managing the rental property. The lack of suitable Indian housing appears to be a combination of inadequate funds from HUD and reluctance among private lenders to provide

mortgages on Indian trust land due to risk of default and general poverty within the Indian population.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report presents the study design and information obtained during site visits to three tribal Even Start projects. Chapter Two provides information about the study design. Chapters Three, Four, and Five contain the individual site visit reports for each project visited. A discussion of local evaluation activities and use of the Even Start Information System (ESIS) appears in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven summarizes key characteristics of the families and services in the three programs and examines the major challenges reported by staff in tribal Even Start projects.

Chapter Two

STUDY DESIGN

This chapter describes the purpose and data collection methods of the study of the tribal Even Start projects.

Purpose of the Study

In March 1994, the Planning and Evaluation Service in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a contract to Fu Associates, Ltd., with a subcontract to Abt Associates, Inc., to design and implement the Even Start Information System (ESIS). The study is a continuation of the four-year national evaluation of the Even Start Program that was completed by Abt Associates and RMC Research Corporation in 1994.

One of the tasks of the current Even Start evaluation is to conduct a special study of the tribal Even Start Program. The main objectives of this study are to:

- increase the knowledge base about tribal Even Start projects;
- identify unique program management issues that these projects face;
- describe instructional practices used by tribal projects; and
- assess the appropriateness of the ESIS forms and procedures for the tribal projects.

The study design called for site visits to a subset of tribal Even Start projects to obtain information to address these goals.

Selection of Projects

The selection of sites was a multi-stage process. The first step was for the research teams at Fu Associates and Abt Associates to review the grant proposals, continuation grant applications, and any available evaluation reports from the nine tribal projects. The staff compared the projects across a range of characteristics, including: geographic location; project organization; number of sites within the projects; and special features of the project. The goal was to choose projects from different geographic regions that represented variation in models of service delivery. Based on this review, and recommendations from the Department of Education on projects that they considered to be fully implemented, we narrowed our selection to six projects.

Staff from Abt Associates called the project directors in each of the six projects in the spring of 1995 to obtain updated information about the project's operations, service delivery, staffing, and schedule. After receiving more information about the six projects, we chose the following three projects to visit: the Makah Tribe in Washington; the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma; and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Arizona.

Approach to On-Site Data Collection

The site visits to the three projects took place between June and October of 1995 and were conducted by two-person teams comprised of one staff member each from Abt Associates and Fu Associates. The teams were on-site at each tribal Even Start project for approximately two days to interview staff and observe project activities.

A topic list was developed that provided a comprehensive and useful protocol for the site visit teams to use in interviewing staff from the projects and the collaborating community agencies. In addition to the topic list, field staff used a short observation guide that helped to focus the review of program components and provided a framework for observing project services. At the completion of the site visits, the observation guides were used to write brief descriptions of the different project activities observed during the visit. The topic list and observation guide appear in Appendix A.

Chapter Three

CHEROKEE NATION EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

The Even Start project in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is administered through the Tribal Services Department of the Cherokee Nation. Located in northeastern Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation is the second largest American Indian tribe in the United States with more than 165,000 members. The Nation does not have a reservation but rather a jurisdictional service area, with boundaries that span 14 counties.

In 1990, the tribe was authorized by Congress to be self-governing, meaning that it can plan, conduct, consolidate, and administer programs and receive federal funds directly from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to deliver services to tribal members. This administrative change is significant to the Cherokee Nation because it allows for total self-government and independence as "intended by the treaties with sovereign Indian nations." Currently, the Cherokee Nation has a $144 million operating budget and employs about 1,600 people.

Daily operations of the Cherokee tribal government span five areas: social services; tribal operations; Marshal Service; health services; and law and justice. Over 150 programs are administered through these divisions, including programs in job training, education, substance abuse prevention, nutrition, and medical and health services.

Characteristics of Community Served

The Cherokee Nation Even Start project serves two distinctly different communities:

- Tahlequah -- a small city in northeast Oklahoma where the administrative offices of the Cherokee Nation are located; and
- Kenwood -- a rural community 48 miles north of Tahlequah near the Arkansas border.

Originally the project had a third site in Porum, but this area was dropped because (1) Kenwood was judged to have a greater need and (2) many of the Porum families did not keep their scheduled appointments. Porum is about 70 miles from the project headquarters in Tahlequah so it was time-consuming to drive there if families were not home for their scheduled visits.

Tahlequah is a small but growing city in Cherokee County with a population of about 19,000, about 75 percent of whom are Cherokee. Population growth in this community is due

largely to the presence of Northeastern State University (NSU) where the student population has been increasing. Cherokees living in Tahlequah tend to be "mixed-bloods" reflecting a high level of intermarriage with non-Cherokees. Nonetheless, at least 70 percent of Tahlequah residents have some Cherokee ancestry, making them eligible for enrollment as tribal members.

Kenwood, in comparison, is a very rural community with a population of about 500. There is no commercial activity in the town other than the general store on the main road. Thus, accessibility to most services, entertainment, and other activities is difficult, and Kenwood residents must drive fairly long distances for these needs. Kenwood is primarily a "full-blooded" community, meaning its resident Cherokees have not intermarried very much and thus remain "pure" Cherokee. The residents typically espouse more traditional Cherokee values and lifestyles. For example, "Kenwoodians" are more likely to include traditional Indian fare as staples of their diet, to be bilingual in Cherokee[2] and English; and to consult a medicine man rather than a medical doctor when family members are ill. Kenwood also is the site of the tribe's "stomp ground," a sacred place where ceremonial stomp dances are held.

Issues and concerns of residents in these two communities in the areas of economics, education, and health are summarized below.

Economics

The unemployment rate for Cherokees in Tahlequah and Kenwood is about 13 percent (compared to about 5 percent for the two counties as a whole). Lack of transportation is a major factor that limits employment opportunities for residents. There is no public transportation in either Tahlequah or Kenwood and there is only one taxi company in Tahlequah.

The Cherokee Nation is headquartered in Tahlequah and is the major employer in the community, employing approximately 1,600 individuals, most of whom (90-95 percent) are American Indians. The other major employer is Northeastern State University (NSU), which has its main campus in Tahlequah. The University, however, has contributed to the high level of unemployment because of the large number of commuter students from the surrounding counties who compete with local residents for jobs (particularly part-time and summer work).

Tahlequah has a city hospital and an Indian Health Service (IHS) hospital, both of which are sources of paraprofessional and professional jobs. Tahlequah also is considered the nursery capitol of Oklahoma, with tree and shrub nurseries providing jobs that require minimal formal education. The chicken processing industry, with several plants owned by the Cherokee Nation, is another source of employment for Tahlequah residents. Finally, the numerous fast food restaurants located on Tahlequah's main commercial strip are a source of minimum wage jobs for semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

---

[2]The Cherokee language comprises a number of dialects, reflecting different clan affiliations (there are seven clans in the tribe) and county locations.

Economic hardship is particularly pronounced in Kenwood where houses are separated by miles, few families have telephones in their homes and many lack cars, adding to families' feelings of isolation. Because of extreme poverty, many extended families live together with two or more generations in the same household. This practice of extended families living in the same household, however, is common among many Indian communities even where poverty is not a factor.

There are very few employment opportunities in rural Kenwood. Many Kenwood residents are transported into Arkansas to work at minimum wage jobs in the chicken processing plants, a large baked goods plant, or a local chair factory. Buses are sent to Kenwood and transport shifts of workers across state lines to and from these plants each day. Other people do seasonal work, such as chopping wood for firewood.

There are some employment opportunities in surrounding communities such as Muskogee, located about 30 miles away, where there is a paper plant, an electricity station and Bacone College. Clarewood, about 40 miles from Kenwood, has a state college, a city hospital, and an IHS hospital -- all sources of professional and paraprofessional employment opportunities.

Education

There are numerous K-8 schools for children who live in Cherokee County. Children living in the area of Cherokee County outside of Tahlequah do not attend school in Tahlequah until the ninth grade. Tahlequah has four public elementary schools, a junior high school, and a public high school, which draws students from all of Cherokee County. The tribe also operates a boarding school for high school students in which nearly all the staff are Cherokee. There is no "blood quantum" (i.e., requirement to prove Cherokee ancestry) to attend these high schools. However, a person must be at least one-quarter Cherokee to be eligible to receive financial assistance through the tribe for postsecondary education.

The 13 percent high school dropout rate for Cherokees is more than twice the rate for the state as a whole (6 percent). The highest rate occurs at ninth grade, when many Cherokee children who have attended rural schools from kindergarten through eighth grade are bused to Tahlequah for high school. Kenwood has a K-8 school but is too small to have its own high school, so Kenwood students are bused to Salina, about ten miles away.

There is another Even Start program in Briggs, 10 miles from Tahlequah, but the Cherokee Nation Even Start project does not have much contact with that program. The Briggs Even Start project also has a waiting list, reflecting the fact that there are no public preschool programs in the area.

Health

Health is a major concern, particularly for the low-income community of Kenwood. One of the problems plaguing both communities, but Kenwood in particular, is the use and abuse of

alcohol and illicit drugs among the young. There are several substance abuse centers run by the Cherokee Nation, including an in-patient drug and alcohol treatment center. There also is a behavioral health clinic operated by the Indian Health Service. While gang violence seems incongruous in this seemingly placid, rural community, gangs have begun to migrate from Tulsa.

Even Start Participants

Most Even Start families earn less than $10,000 a year and do not have more than three children. About 35 percent of participating families are headed by a single parent. In the two-parent households, most mothers stay at home full time. Parents' ages range from under 19 to 41 years of age. Most of the children participating in Even Start are either less than two years old or between five and seven years of age. Currently, 12 of the 42 Even Start children are dually enrolled in Head Start and Even Start.

Recruitment of Families

The project gets referrals through Indian Child Welfare (part of the Cherokee Nation) and the State Department of Human Services. After the initial project recruitment three years ago, there has been no need for additional recruitment activities. In fact, there has been a waiting list since the project's inception; currently the list includes 16 families. Once the need for services is established, families are placed on the waiting list. An 11-point system is used to prioritize families' placement on the list; the more points a family has, the higher the priority they are given. The following 11 criteria are used to assess families on the waiting list:

- at least one Indian parent;
- at least one Indian child under the age of eight;
- low income;
- low adult literacy;
- eligible parent or child with a disability;
- homelessness;
- chronic unemployment;
- single parent;
- teen parent;
- a referral from a collaborating agency; and
- not enrolled in Head Start or other education/service program.

Turnover among families in the project is low. Sixteen of the 20 families currently being served have been in the project for three years. Of the four families that left, three moved out of the service area for employment purposes and one withdrew because of a legal problem.

Staff

Staff Positions

The Even Start staff consists of four full-time employees: a project coordinator; an adult education teacher; an early childhood education teacher who also does parenting education; and a secretary. The project coordinator and both teachers have been with the project for three years.

The project coordinator's role is primarily administrative, supervising and coordinating all Even Start activities, including the instruction provided by the two teachers and during the monthly group meetings. She has worked for the Tribal Services Department since June 1993 and for the tribe since 1984. She is one-quarter Cherokee, a native of Oklahoma, and has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Oklahoma State University. Her previous work experience includes ten years in the Cherokee Nation Head Start, both as a home-based teacher and as an education coordinator.

The early childhood education instructor has extensive experience in early childhood education, having worked for Cherokee Nation Head Start for 14 years. She began working at Head Start as a cook but subsequently became a home-based teacher. She has been with Even Start since its start-up three years ago and earned her Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate from Northeastern State University. She is one-quarter Cherokee and has lived in Tahlequah all her life.

The adult education instructor is a full-blooded Navaho and has a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Central State University. His prior experience includes eight years of military service working as an air traffic controller and as an officer in the infantry.

Staff Support Services

Even Start staff receive training from Head Start, the Cherokee Nation adult education program, and the Cherokee Nation Child Development Center. Within the Cherokee Nation, the Indian Child Welfare and Employment Development Office also offer a variety of in-service training sessions. Staff also have the opportunity to attend outside conferences and training. In the spring of 1994, the early childhood teacher, the adult education teacher, and the coordinator attended a workshop in Tulsa on reading aloud to children. In addition, both the child and adult educators went to Muskogee in the summer of 1995 for monthly workshops at the Learning Ladder Center.

The early childhood educator also attended a five-day family literacy conference in Louisville, Kentucky; an Even Start national conference held in Washington, D.C., in June 1994; and a conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, sponsored by the Southern Association for Children under Six, in December 1994.

The adult educator also received training from the Cherokee Nation Marshal Services on styles of communication with gangs, attended a workshop on communication with families at the Family Literacy Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, and attended workshops on self-esteem and promoting tolerance of other cultures.

Staff Supervision

The project coordinator supervises the staff and conducts yearly performance evaluations. She also reviews and monitors the files for each Even Start family; every Friday, she meets with the two teachers to review and develop the education plans for each family.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

The project runs year-round and serves 20 families. The project is primarily home-based and services are delivered by a two-person team consisting of an adult educator and an early childhood educator. The project also delivers parenting education services by conducting monthly parent meetings that serve as social gatherings as well as forums for discussion on a variety of topics of interest to parents.

The Even Start project shares office space with the Cherokee Nation Child Subsidy Program and is located in a two-story house on the campus of the Sequoyah High School, a tuition-free boarding school operated by the Cherokee Nation. Monthly parent meetings in Tahlequah take place at the Child Development Center located on the high school campus. The parent meetings in Kenwood are held at the local Head Start center.

Early Childhood Education

The project currently serves 42 children, including four infants. Instruction occurs during a weekly home visit that lasts from one to one and one-half hours. The early childhood educator develops individual, age-appropriate lesson plans for each child. For families with more than one child, the activities may be individualized for each child or conducted with more than one child, depending upon how close the children are in age. Early childhood instruction covers the following seven domains:

- language naming (picture cards, naming objects);
- language comprehension (includes science activities);

- cognitive matching (utilizes shapes, colors, size, and sorting);
- cognitive counting;
- fine motor skills;
- gross motor skills; and
- personal and social skills (includes self-help skills like tying shoe laces).

An Early Childhood Education Home Visit

The one and one-half hour visit is conducted in the family's mobile home located in a trailer park. The parents rent the home, with HUD assistance. Although both parents are at home, the father, whose work at the local nursery is seasonal, remains in the bedroom during the visit.

Instruction for the three boys (ages four, five, and seven) occurs at the kitchen table. To begin, the early childhood teacher gives the oldest child letter cards and plastic molds on which he traces the letter with colored markers. She then asks him to alphabetize the cards, which he does with minimal errors. At the same time, his two younger brothers work on puzzles. Next, all three boys are given the task of matching rubber and plastic shapes to picture cards. Another task involves matching punch-out objects to pattern cards. The teacher encourages verbalization by asking the children to name the objects. The teacher also plays a memory game with the five-year-old, placing four animal cards on the table and asking him to close his eyes and name the card that she has removed. The teacher gives the child clues when he has difficulty with one of the objects.

During the visit, the teacher spends time individually with each child, continually trying to stimulate conversation. She also gives the children a choice of activities including: word/picture cards (word recognition task); opposites; and a language activity. The children are quiet, attentive, and focused on the tasks during the lessons. The visit ends with the children playing baseball outside for 15 minutes with a pitching mound set and a bat and ball brought by the child educator.

Equipment and materials used for early childhood instruction include books, tapes, the tutorette (an audiotronic device that records and plays aloud the message encoded on the tape strip of cards), audio-visual cards, films, and a projector with tape player.

Teachers administer the Denver II assessment to identify areas in which children need help. Children less than two years old are tested every three months, and children between three and five years old are tested every six months. School-age children are tested by the public

school, and the Even Start staff have access to these test results. In addition, parents provide information about their children's perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Many of the children in the project have difficulty with the physical act of writing. Instructional activities to develop small hand muscles needed for writing include painting, use of markers, and tracing books. According to the early childhood educator, another area of weakness for many children is language skills. For instance, she describes a four-year-old boy who communicates his wishes via one-word sentences or sometimes by grunting and gesturing.

Adult Education

Adult education is provided during the weekly home visit by the adult educator. The focus of the instruction is on providing parents with sufficient academic skills to obtain a GED certificate. Accordingly, home lessons focus on the primary academic areas tested by the GED--language arts, social studies, math, literature and arts, and science. Adults are given the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to identify strengths and weaknesses, with instruction targeted to the areas of weakness. Upon entering the project, most Even Start parents' reading skills are between the fourth and seventh grade levels. As part of the effort to help parents in their literacy development, the project has started a lending library of adult and children's books.

As part of the instruction, the adult educator always assigns weekly homework in at least one subject. However, one of the problems identified by the teacher is that parents do not consistently complete these assignments. In addition, attendance can also be a problem, particularly when family and/or personal problems take priority over adult education. Only three of the 20 Even Start families have telephones in their homes, making it difficult for parents to call and cancel or to reschedule home visits.

After a parent earns his/her GED, the focus of the adult educator shifts to helping the parent define and set realistic short- and long-term career and life goals. By addressing these issues, the adult educator helps the parent develop realistic employment and educational goals and identify the necessary steps to reach these goals. Often, the adult educator tries to motivate the parents to continue their education by enrolling in college, a vocational technical program, or a job training program.

Parenting Education

Parenting education occurs once a month at the center-based parent meetings. Each of the two sites has its own monthly parent meetings. The meetings last about two hours and involve a meal, followed by a staff presentation or guest speaker on a topic that parents have expressed an interest in (e.g., home safety). Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) is currently being used in many of the monthly parent meetings. There also is a marital enrichment unit, taught by the adult educator, that includes exercises for couples to complete on their own.

Informational pamphlets are distributed at the parent meetings (and during home visits) that deal with an array of topics such as sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, home safety, and drugs and alcohol.

An Adult Education Home Visit

While the three boys are in the kitchen with the early childhood education teacher, the adult educator and the Even Start mother sit on the sofa in the living room. The visit begins with a discussion of general life issues, during which the mother indicates that the family may move to Fayetteville, Arkansas, in order to find steadier employment. The adult education teacher probes this issue, asking her what she will do about continuing her progress toward her GED. (According to the teacher, this parent is very close to completing her preparation to take the GED test.) No clear resolution of the consequences of moving is reached, but the teacher makes it clear that he really wants her to obtain her GED and he is concerned that a move might deter this process.

The academic work begins with the teacher asking to see the mother's math homework, which consists of workbook pages of drill and practice with place value and decimals. The mother has not completed the assignment so the teacher helps her work through the exercises, explaining the rules of decimal use, as needed. The teacher corrects the section of the homework that was completed, while the mother continues working through the workbook exercises. During the visit, the teacher engages the mother in a discussion about doing her homework and asks how much time she spends on assignments. The mother responds that if she understands the material and what she has to do, she spends five to six hours. However, if she doesn't understand something then she is stuck; without a telephone in the home, she cannot call anyone for help.

When the visit ends, the teacher gives the mother a homework assignment of five GED practice tests (one for each subject area), which are to be completed before the next visit.

Generally, attendance at the parent meetings is better among the Kenwood families than it is among the Tahlequah families, despite the fact that the families in Kenwood live considerably further away. Staff attribute this difference to the fact that there are more recreational opportunities in Tahlequah than Kenwood and, therefore, the meetings are less attractive to families in Tahlequah given the alternatives. For the Kenwood families, the monthly meetings provide a rare opportunity for socializing and often serve as the parents' only chance to see their neighbors.

Support Services

During the home visits, both instructors provide informal social work, ranging from advocacy with a utility company to restore electricity for a family unable to pay their bill to nutritional advice or nutrition education. Staff also provide a nutritious snack, usually fresh fruit or granola bars, for children during home visits. Fresh fruit is considered both a treat and a luxury because many of the project's families rely on food stamps and subsist on canned goods and discount foods.

Project staff also provide transportation and have access to a government-issued van to transport families when needed and to bring parents to and from the monthly parent meetings. Staff go to great lengths to reduce obstacles for families that might distract them from obtaining their education goals, such as dropping off a mother at the grocery store to do her weekly shopping or transporting a sick child to the doctor.

There are also many programs in the Cherokee Nation offering social services to Even Start families, including:

- Cherokee Nation Child Development Center;
- Cherokee Nation Child Care Subsidy Program;
- the STEP program (Serving Teens through Education and Prevention), which currently helps 20 pregnant teens and teen mothers to finish high school or obtain a GED;
- the Bill Willis Skill Center, a vocational education center; and
- Community Action Head Start.

Coordination of Service Components

As stated earlier, activities for each family are planned by the two Even Start teachers and the project coordinator. While there is some coordination among staff, the adult education instruction component has its own focus of obtaining the GED and is separate from the early childhood instruction.

The project does, however, collaborate with other programs serving the community, such as the Cherokee Nation Head Start, which is a large program with 22 centers and 10 home-based sites that each serve 12 families. The Head Start program serves more than 550 three- to five-year-olds and has a good relationship with Even Start. As noted earlier, Even Start staff also participate in workshops and in-service trainings provided by Head Start.

Given the revisions in the Even Start legislation, which now permit projects to serve parents under 18 years of age, the project foresees collaborating more with the local Job Corps Center. The Job Corps Center is administered by the Cherokee Nation under contract to the Department of Labor (DOL) and is one of two Job Corps Centers in the country that is Indian-operated. The Even Start project also plans to collaborate with Youth Fair Chance, a program for youths aged 14 to 30 that offers a full array of job preparation training and GED preparation. The program was scheduled to begin services in the fall of 1995. The program's mobile unit will house a lending library that Even Start families will be able to use. This is especially important because Kenwood has no local library.

Currently, there also is some collaboration between Northeastern State University (NSU) and Even Start, although at this point it is not strong. The university began as an Indian Seminary in 1870 and today draws a large number of American Indian college students from within the state as well as from all over the country. NSU's education department has a family literacy program that includes a GED program and computer education, but few Even Start families are able to avail themselves of these opportunities due to lack of transportation. However, at least one Even Start child participates in computer classes for children sponsored by the university, and another child with a pronounced language delay was due to be enrolled in the university's new language lab.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

The Even Start project is in its fourth year of operation, and almost all of the families who enrolled at the onset are still in the program. Overall, parents are receptive to the project and no-shows are rare, particularly after the first year when the project ended services for the three families in Porum in order to expand services in Kenwood.

Attendance for home visits is reported to be a minor problem for some families, but not a large issue for the project as a whole. Completion of adult education homework assignments is less consistent than attendance; often parents will complete assignments diligently for a period of time, then stop because they either lose interest or become distracted by family emergencies. Participation in the monthly parent meetings is moderately high, usually six to eight of the ten families in each site participate. The project offers meals at the meetings as an incentive to encourage parents to attend.

One dilemma that staff face is determining when families should exit the program. This is especially important since several active project families have improved their circumstances (e.g., obtained employment) and there are families on the waiting list who have greater needs. On the other hand, staff feel that to deny services to families who are beginning to benefit from participation might reverse the positive effects the project has had thus far.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

The local evaluation is being conducted by two members of the American Indian Resource Center. The evaluators collect descriptive data on a variety of aspects of the program (e.g., number of social services provided, number of home visits missed). Their evaluation activities include interviews with program participants and observations of parent meetings. The evaluators also make recommendations to help meet stated program objectives.

The project coordinator did not cite any particular problems in compiling data for the national evaluation nor did she feel that the ESIS items were inappropriate or culturally biased.

Conclusions and Lessons

Project Impacts

Staff report that the project is successful and cite the following impacts:

- Five parents passed the GED test and earned their certificates. Previous to Even Start, many parents had dropped out of GED classes and adult education programs before earning their certificate.
- Several parents who were unemployed at the start of the project have found jobs.
- One parent is the first member of her family to graduate from high school and has enrolled in college. She has since had to drop out of college because of a health problem but plans to re-enroll in the near future.
- More children are performing at their expected developmental level, even into the primary grades.
- Often for the first time in their lives, many parents are setting goals and making progress toward them.

Program Features Most Important to its Success

According to staff, the program feature most critical for the project's success is the delivery of services using a home-based approach. The project director noted that culturally, parents are much more comfortable receiving services in their own homes than in a public setting. In addition, participation in center-based programs requires access to transportation, which is a problem for many project families. Community programs that offer similar services, such as adult education, are available, but are poorly attended by American Indians.

Challenges Faced by the Project

Transportation is the project's greatest challenge. One van, while helpful, is insufficient to serve the needs of all the project families. It is used by staff for home visits, to transport families to events, and to transport family members to doctors' appointments, the grocery store, or other key destinations. The addition of a second van would enable the project to provide regular field trips for Even Start children and their parents, many of whom have never been to places such as the Oklahoma Zoo in Tulsa. According to the project coordinator, "Right now, we only have one eight-passenger van, but we actually need two 15-passenger vans."

A second challenge for the project, noted by the project coordinator, is establishing a process by which families can exit the project. This is particularly important in light of the large and growing waiting list of families whose need for services is more pressing than some of the families who have been participating for the past three years.

The poor living conditions of the Even Start families also pose a challenge to the home-based service delivery model; many homes lack the most basic furniture. The coordinator ordered two child-sized folding desks and chairs that the early childhood educator brings with her into homes that lack adequate work space. The adult educator also brings folding desks and chairs for some of his home visits. Prior to the purchase of these desks and chairs, lessons were conducted outside with the teacher and students sitting on makeshift items such as buckets.

A final challenge to the project is the low level of verbal interaction that parents have with their children. As a result, many of the children are delayed in their language development, often speaking only in partial sentences or rarely speaking at all. Parents themselves also often have difficulty writing full sentences. The child educator views increasing the quality and quantity of parent-child verbal interactions as one of her most significant instructional challenges.

Chapter Four

MAKAH EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

The Even Start project in Neah Bay, Washington, is administered by the Makah Indian Tribe, a group with a 2,000-year history. The tribe is a "self-governance tribe," which means that it receives funding directly from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and manages these funds at its own discretion rather than receiving funds subcontracted through the BIA. The tribe has been self-governing for four years and, according to one council member, "self-governance offers tribes the opportunity to break out of the stigma that we are wards of the federal government." In addition to promoting accountability among tribal members and discouraging dependence on state or other funding agencies, self-governance enables the tribe to create more jobs on the reservation and to consolidate programs that were previously operated by or subcontracted through the BIA.

The tribe is governed by the Makah Tribal Council which includes a chairman, a vice-chairman, a treasurer, and two council members. Each member of the council has responsibility for certain tribal activities and services. The tribe's approximately 140 elders (members of the tribe who are 50 years old or older) are a treasured resource for the tribe, especially those who are in their 70's and 80's. The elders act as advisers to the council, and their guidance is sought on almost all issues affecting the tribe. In addition, the older tribal members are a rich source of Makah history and tradition and are the only members of the tribe who are fluent in the Makah language.

The Makahs have their own police department, juvenile probation office, and full tribal court system. The tribe also operates a substance abuse/chemical dependency program in the community and the Indian Health Service uses federal funds to provide basic health care and dental services. Other services on the reservation include HUD Indian housing, Indian child welfare, social services, Head Start, WIC, JTPA, and federal commodities. There are two schools on the reservation, an elementary school and a high school, which are public schools operated by the state.

Characteristics of Community Served

The Makah Indian Reservation, bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the north, encompasses 44 square miles of rural land on the northwest corner of the United States. Neah Bay is the main community on the reservation and originated from a small fishing village. Residents refer to the isolated coastal town of Neah Bay as the "the beginning of the earth." The closest major city to Neah Bay is Port Angeles, located about 75

miles to the east. The primary industry in Neah Bay is commercial fishing; tourism, local government, and education programs are other key industries in the community. Forestry and logging had been a large industry in the area until a major logging company left Neah Bay about five years ago when a large portion of forest land was appropriated as federal park land.

Other commercial activities in the community include: a large general store, which sells groceries and supplies; two small restaurants; several motels; and a few small businesses. The town also contains the Makah Cultural and Research Center, a large museum that features the largest archaeological collection of any North American tribe with artifacts from a 500-year-old Makah village that was destroyed in a mudslide and uncovered during a storm in 1970.

The reservation has an elementary school and a high school, with about 350 students in grades K-12. An average of 16 students graduate from the high school each year out of an entering class of 40. Both schools are operated by the state department of education; about 25 percent of school staff are members of the tribe. Project staff report that the quality of public education on the reservation is poor and that it is not uncommon for a high school honors student graduating to place below average in college English or math.

As of 1995, there are approximately 2,000 members in the Makah Tribe; between 25 and 40 babies are born each year on the reservation. About two-thirds of the members reside on the reservation and about 500 members live elsewhere. Some families leave the reservation for a period of time to allow their children to obtain a higher quality of education than is available from the Neah Bay public schools. Staff estimate that about 20 percent of the tribe members have lived somewhere else and moved back to the reservation, and only about two percent leave the reservation permanently each year.

Due to the decline in the timber industry and the sparsity of other industry in the area, the poverty rate in Neah Bay is 51 percent and the unemployment rate is 49 percent. According to staff, unemployment is higher among men because women are more likely to obtain employment in the local government and education programs. Approximately 50 percent of tribal families receive financial assistance; about 25 percent receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and another 25 percent receive General Assistance (GA) provided by the tribe.

Land on the reservation is held in trust by the tribe for its members. In addition, tribal members can purchase land from the tribe. About 50 percent of the tribal families own their own homes, and the other half live in rental units administered by the tribe through HUD Indian housing. Much of the housing on the reservation is old and substandard, but Makah Housing recently built some newer, low-cost houses to replace some of the older housing units.

Despite the economic difficulties and challenges of living on the reservation, tribal members report that most Makahs have a very strong connection to the community and want to remain on the reservation. Maintaining family ties and keeping the Makah culture alive is very important to the tribe and to the education leaders. The Makah tribe has its own language and written alphabet, but few tribal members other than the elders can speak Makah. To regain some

of this lost linguistic heritage, the Makah alphabet is incorporated into the Even Start early childhood and parenting education components, and the tribe is trying to incorporate the Makah language and the culture into the public schools, with limited success.

The majority of families participating in the Even Start program are two-parent families, 18 to 22 years old. About 70 percent of the mothers are employed and about 50 percent of the parents have their high school diploma. Staff report that Even Start parents place a high value on education for their children and generally want more for their children than they have had for themselves. About half of the Even Start families also have a child in Head Start.

Recruitment of Families

There are three eligibility requirements for the Makah Even Start project: (1) a family must have one or more Indian children from birth through age 7; (2) a parent must have a need for adult education; and (3) a parent must be willing to participate in all three Even Start components. All applicants are given the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine their education needs. The project considers individuals without a GED or a high school diploma, or individuals with high school diplomas who need help in basic secondary education skills, to be in need of adult education. The project also gives special preference to families in chronic poverty and/or who rely on seasonal employment.

Currently, there are five families on the project's waiting list, all of whom have above average income or education. According to staff, these families want to participate in the project but are not considered most in need. This is sometimes frustrating because staff feel that many in the community could benefit from the Even Start program, but not all meet the three criteria listed above. Staff report that they sometimes allow these families to participate in play groups if space permits and the group needs additional children for organized activities.

When the project first began, staff used a variety of techniques to recruit families, such as working with the WIC and Well Child program to identify families in need, advertising in the tribal newsletter, placing posters in key locations in the community, calling families by telephone, and going door-to-door explaining the program. According to staff, traveling door-to-door obtained the highest response from parents.

According to staff, families are especially interested in the Even Start play groups and home visits because these services are not offered through other community agencies. However, when the program began, parents wanted the adult education component to be less structured. In response to parents' concerns and the high attrition rate, staff changed the adult education classes to allow parents more flexibility in their schedules and give them the opportunity to work more independently.

Staff

Staff Positions

The Even Start staff consists of a director, a coordinator, two home visitors, a half-time program assistant, and a part-time adult education instructor contracted from a local college. The project also has one volunteer from the school department who helps the special education coordinator in the schools. The volunteer also will be working with Even Start children during the summer program. Currently, the project has an adult literacy position temporarily vacant. This role involves conducting primary assessments and working with the adult education instructor. Until the position is filled, the program assistant is assuming some of these responsibilities.

The project director is also the tribal education director and supervises more than 20 education programs for adults and children on the reservation. She has an extensive background in adult education and had been the adult education instructor at the Makah Learning Center for two years before assuming the position of Even Start director in January 1995. She has a master's degree in Whole Systems Design and has previously operated a technical and management consulting business outside of her tribal and Even Start responsibilities.

The project coordinator is responsible for coordinating all early childhood and parenting education activities. In this role, she provides outreach to parents, conducts parenting education workshops, and supervises the home visitors. Other responsibilities include handling the budgets for the early childhood, adult education, and parenting education components; collaborating with outside agencies; and coordinating training for parents and staff. The project coordinator has been in this position for two years, having worked previously in Head Start as the parent involvement coordinator. She also has experience working with parents in other community agencies. Her education background includes a high school diploma and nursing courses. In addition, she is a certified Parents as Teachers (PAT) instructor. Currently, she is studying for a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

The two home visitors conduct play groups for Even Start children, provide early childhood education and parenting education activities during home visits, and plan other program activities and workshops. One of the home visitors focuses on conducting the play groups while the other conducts home visits; however, the staff function as a team and help each other out whenever necessary. The home visitors do not consider themselves to be case managers but they often help families with issues not directly related to Even Start and refer participants to outside agencies when needed.

Both of the home visitors have returned to the reservation in the past several years after attending school and working in other parts of Washington state. They both have high school diplomas, have taken college classes, and are certified PAT instructors. Their combined employment experiences includes operating a family day care home, babysitting, and doing volunteer work for human service agencies.

The program assistant participated in Even Start services for three years and has been employed by the project for about six months. She is a high school graduate and has previously worked as an office manager. She currently works half-time for Even Start and spends the remainder of her time working in other tribal programs such as Head Start, JTPA, and the JOBS program. Her primary responsibilities for the Even Start project (as well as for other programs) are record-keeping and developing computerized forms and materials. She also is involved in follow-up, outreach, and retention activities for the Even Start project. Currently, she is assuming some responsibilities of the Even Start adult literacy position including: administering the TABE test to participants; sending the TABE tests to Northwest Indian College; coordinating adult education services with the instructor from Northwest College; and keeping track of attendance in adult education classes.

A part-time adult education instructor from the Northwest Indian College works in the Makah Learning Center two evenings a week during the school year. The instructor works with students who are independently preparing for their GED or studying adult basic education. He spends his time at the center reviewing TABE test results and working with students on a one-to-one basis, as needed.

Staff Support Services

The project provides regular training to staff in a variety of areas. Training is provided on-site by the project director and other community staff and is available to staff through other resources throughout the state as well as out-of-state. On-site training provided by the project includes topics such as cultural infusion and program evaluation. Staff also attend four on-site evaluation sessions each year to review program objectives, strategies, and program records. In addition, staff participate in weekly Child Development Associates (CDA) classes offered by a local college. Staff also attend state and national Even Start meetings and conferences where they receive additional training.

Staff have also attended off-site training on fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol effects, "Women and Wellness," child development, supervisory skills, and family literacy. In addition, staff usually attend several training programs out-of-state each year. In the past several years, the project coordinator and home visitors attended out-of-state training conferences to become certified as Parents as Teachers (PAT) instructors.

Staff supervision is provided by the director and coordinator. The project director supervises the project coordinator, and they meet three to four times a week to discuss program activities and issues. In addition, the project director and coordinator meet informally with the home visitors daily and provide weekly supervision to plan program activities, review schedules, and share other program information. The program coordinator also supervises the program assistant and meets with her monthly to plan the summer family literacy program.

Since the project started in 1993, turnover has occurred in each staff position. The original project coordinator left after the project's first year and the project director retired in

January 1995. Both home visitor positions also have changed more than twice, with each person staying about 18 months.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

The project provides services in early childhood education, parenting education, and adult education. Early childhood services and parenting education services are provided primarily by the Even Start staff and adult education services are provided through the Makah Learning Center and an instructor from a local Indian college. The Even Start project provides child care and transportation, and coordinates with the Child Find Program, which sponsors events to increase parents' awareness of their children's developmental deficits in order to identify issues and obtain help for their children.

The Even Start project does not have its own building and staff share office space and program space with other community agencies. The home visitors have office space in the Head Start building and use the Head Start classrooms when classes are not in session. The project director, coordinator, and assistant have office space in the Makah Learning Center, an adult education center on the reservation located about two blocks from Head Start. Even Start activities are held in the Head Start classrooms, at the Makah Learning Center, in families' homes, and in the elementary school. All of the space available to the project, including the families' homes, is suitable for the activities conducted but, ideally, staff would like their own building for activities and the opportunity for more collaboration among staff.

Early Childhood Education and Parenting Education

Early childhood education and parenting education services are often provided concurrently by the home visitors during home visits. For children less than four years old, the home visits are based on lesson plans from the Missouri-based PAT curriculum, which encompasses all stages of development from birth to three years of age. There are four domains featured in the curriculum: social; intellectual; physical; and cognitive. The program's goal is to teach the parent to be the child's first and most important teacher. The staff report that they like the PAT program and feel that the lesson plans and activities, often with matching handouts for parents, are useful and beneficial. Staff report that an advantage to the PAT program is that the activities are well-planned, age-appropriate, and very structured. Another advantage is that staff no longer must search through assorted materials and books to come up with ideas on their own. A disadvantage to the PAT program is that it is not culturally relevant for American Indian families and does not include extended families in the curriculum.

The home visitors try to conduct home visits with each family at least once a week for an hour to an hour-and-one-half but usually visit families every other week to accommodate parents' busy schedules. The staff meet with both mothers and fathers, depending upon who is home during the scheduled time. Activities during the home visits, especially with children less than three years old, focus on a particular domain from the PAT program and usually involve at least

one age-appropriate activity that the parent and child can do together. Program staff model positive parenting behavior and act as facilitators between parent and child. Staff also provide written information from the PAT program relating to the theme of the visit (e.g., child development, health, and nutrition).

A Home Visit

The home visitor is at the home of an Even Start mother who also works at the project. The participant's husband was formerly in the military and is currently seasonally employed. The family has three young children and lives in a single-story, newly built, and freshly painted ranch house. The interior of the house is cozy and attractively decorated, with many children's toys in evidence. Both the mother and father are present throughout the hour-long visit but the father stays in the background tending to the seven-month-old baby.

The first activity involves painting to music. Based on the PAT curriculum, this activity is used to develop small muscles to advance writing skills. The home visitor provides a makeshift easel, jars of paint, paint brushes, animal shaped sponges, and musical cassette tapes. The mother and two-year-old son actively engage in the painting activity and the home visitor facilitates interaction, occasionally posing questions and identifying animals and colors using both English and Makah words. The second activity involves identifying glossy pictures of exotic animals in magazines brought by the home visitor. The tapes play in the background and include classical music along with recordings of Makah songs.

As the visit ends, the home visitor gives the mother several brochures on children's intellectual development. The home visitor also leaves a selection of children's and adult books from the lending library and suggests activities that the mother can do with her son over the next week.

In addition to the home visits, early childhood education is provided through play groups conducted by the home visitors. Five play groups are held each week and children are divided into groups by age: birth to three years old; three to five years old; and five to seven years old. The play groups for five- to seven-year-old children are held in the elementary school because most of these parents are employed during the day and unable to host the group in their home. The play groups for three- to five-year-olds are held in participants' homes and the groups for the youngest children are usually held in homes or in the Head Start center if a home is not available. All Even Start parents are invited to participate in the play groups; some participate in almost every group, but others come less frequently. Activities for the play groups, especially the younger groups, are mostly based on the PAT curriculum. The focus for the older groups is usually on cultural activities and games while the younger groups tend to center around social

interaction and activities that can be used to foster positive behavior such as taking turns and appropriate socialization.

A Play Group

The play group is being held at the Neah Bay Elementary School in a large classroom with several round tables and chairs. The two home visitors are leading the group which includes eight children ages five to seven years, two of whom are daughters of one of the home visitors. The theme for the group is safety.

The group begins with a snack of orange juice, apple slices, and peanut butter; a discussion about the food is integrated into the safety theme (e.g., "Take small bites because peanut butter and apple can choke you."). One of the leaders is sitting and talking informally with a few of the children while the other staff member engages the children in a brief discussion about food groups.

Following the snack, the group engages in a game entitled "glass on the beach" involving color tiles imprinted with letters and words that represent "glass." The leaders give each child a bag to pick up the "glass" from the floor and the children scramble to retrieve the tiles. During the activity, the leaders tell the children that it is unsafe for them to pick up real glass on the beach, but they should pick up other litter, such as paper and plastics. The leaders also remind the children to always wear shoes when walking on the beach. This prompts several children to step on tiles and claim that they have stepped on glass. One of the group leaders and several children respond with a toy physician's kit.

The project coordinator also provides parenting education services through monthly workshops and programs. Topics are selected based on interests and needs reported by parents on the project's annual family needs assessment. Topics for these events have included dealing with anger, health issues, effective discipline measures, and child development. In addition, the project coordinator is conducting a four-week workshop series on Positive Indian Parenting (PIP), a program based on traditional values that incorporates instructional modalities such as storytelling and legends. She received training on the PIP program through the National Indian Welfare Association. She reports that one advantage to the program is that it helps some families who have not been raised with traditional Indian values to learn more about American Indian culture and traditions. The disadvantage to the program is that the curriculum is based on the traditions and cultures of many different tribes and is not specific to the Makah tribe.

In addition to the regularly scheduled home visits and play groups, the Even Start staff also collaborate with Head Start to provide special events each month for parents and children.

Activities are based on the McMillan Guide curriculum for parent and child activities and include events and activities such as holiday parties, making pizza, or cooking holiday foods.

Adult Education

Adult education services are provided primarily through the Makah Learning Center, an adult education agency located on the main street of Neah Bay and operated by the Makah tribe. The Even Start project has expanded the weekly adult basic education/GED classes previously provided to the current array of classes that include small business classes in accounting and marketing, a two-year correspondence course, and computer instruction. In addition to the regularly scheduled classes and adult education services, the agency occasionally brings in outside consultants to provide special workshops or computer classes for participants and staff. Plans are also underway to obtain a satellite dish to offer distance learning to increase access to two- and four-year degree programs[3].

The intake process begins with a TABE test, given by the Even Start program assistant. The project director reviews the results with each student and together they develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that addresses the skills and areas that the student needs to focus on along with employment goals. The intake process also includes the "Choices" software program, a career inventory that identifies areas of interest and talent along with the type and level of education required for different paths. The program can be used over time to enable the student to narrow his/her choices and to develop goals that are directed toward an eventual career choice.

Most activities take place in an agency room with six computers, a few printers, and tables and chairs for about ten students. The three computers purchased with Even Start funds are recent models and equipped with Windows software.

Support Services

Transportation is not a major problem on the reservation because most families have cars and a large percentage of Even Start services are offered in families' homes. Home visitors regularly transport children to and from play groups in their own cars and, on occasion, staff transport parents to activities.

---

[3]Generally, Even Start funds may only be used for adult education and literacy instruction through the adult secondary level. Accordingly, computer instruction, like other job training, is an appropriate use of funds if the purpose of that instruction is to teach literacy rather than learn job skills. Funds also may be used for support services which, to some degree, may include services such as employment counseling and job skills, but only if necessary to enable a family to participate in the Even Start project. The primary focus for the use of Even Start funds must be on providing the three core components of the program—adult basic or literacy instruction, parenting education, and high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood instruction.

Child care is offered on-site by a babysitter during the monthly parenting education classes conducted by the project coordinator. Although child care is not available during the adult education classes, money is available from the project to pay for babysitting while parents are attending classes. The tribe is currently in the process of applying for a grant to establish a child care center that would offer full day care for children birth to age five.

Coordination of Service Components

Early childhood education and parenting education services are closely aligned, especially since the staff use the PAT curriculum for both of these components. Parent-child activities occur during the play groups as well as during home visits, and parents receive informational and educational materials available through the PAT curriculum. The home visitors also regularly plan activities together and work closely with the project coordinator to develop early childhood and parenting activities.

There is limited coordination, however, between the early childhood and parenting services and the adult education component. The adult education staff plans basic education activities separately from the home visitors and the two groups have limited daily interaction, in large part due to working in separate buildings. Home visitors expressed interest in obtaining attendance lists for participants involved in adult education but were not aware of procedures for communicating this information between adult education staff and the home visitors. The project director hopes that relocating the Even Start staff to one facility will increase coordination among service components.

The majority of collaborating agencies providing services to Even Start families are operated through the Makah Tribe. Consequently, the Even Start project is well integrated into other tribal services and enjoys a good working relationship with many of the collaborating agencies. The Even Start director is also the tribe's education director, and is active in tribal council policy matters, which helps in project coordination and collaboration. The project collaborates closely with the Head Start program that has been operating on the reservation for 25 years.

The relationship between the school district and the project has improved in recent years, and the school provides space for play groups and staff support. However, staff report that the school district is not meeting all of the needs of the Makah students. Project staff report that one problem is that the local clinic and elementary school are not diagnosing children with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). As a result, the schools treat the FAS children as though they suffer from attention deficit disorder or behavior problems, and are not using specific techniques that have been developed to use with FAS children. Project staff also feel that many school staff discount the idea of Indian learning styles, which is an ongoing struggle between the tribe and the school. Tribal education staff and, in particular, the Even Start director are trying to work with the teachers in the Neah Bay schools to introduce the Makah culture into the classroom and to incorporate Indian learning styles into the classroom. They have had limited success, and only

two teachers attended a seminar on Indian education at the University of Washington taught by the Even Start project director.

Currently, the project does not have formal procedures for referring Even Start participants to outside agencies. The project coordinator is in the process of developing a formal referral system for the project.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

Home visitors keep attendance records for both play groups and home visits and contact parents who miss more than two activities to find out why they are not participating. Attendance records are also kept at the Makah Learning Center, and the program assistant follows up absences by telephoning participants. Retention strategies include working around parents' needs, organizing social activities, and developing creative ideas for project activities.

Even Start families are required to participate in all three Even Start components but often these requirements are not strongly enforced. Staff report that families want the services, particularly the play groups, but employment and lack of time often interfere with their participation. Families who do not participate in any of the three program components for a 30-day period are sent a letter and contacted by telephone. If families do not respond within five days, they are considered inactive but can become active again when they regain interest.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

The local evaluator usually visits the project monthly and conducts interviews and surveys with project staff and participants for the local evaluation reports. In addition, she has adapted the ESIS forms to include additional items of interest to the local evaluation (e.g., number of participants receiving driver's license, number of participants attending college, number of play groups scheduled versus held, family-level participation data). The local evaluator also is helping the project write an operations manual and design procedures to monitor program goals and participation data. The plan is to network all of the project computers and to develop a data base that would provide access to participant records for all project staff. Project staff hope to have the system up and running by the fall of 1995.

Project staff report that they have been able to use the ESIS successfully and have not had any problems in using the software or fulfilling the national evaluation requirements. Currently, the program staff collect all of the intake and participation data necessary for the national evaluation through forms developed by the local evaluator. After the information is collected, the local evaluator works with the staff to transfer this information onto the ESIS forms.

Staff did not find any of the ESIS inappropriate for the American Indian population, but the local evaluator found the ESIS to be directed more toward immigrant groups than to

individuals born in the United States. For example, the questions ask about years of education in the United States. In addition, for American Indians, tribal affiliation is an important factor in terms of entitlements and service eligibility, but the ESIS asks only about ethnicity.

Conclusions and Lessons

Program Impacts

Most staff report that the largest program impacts on parents are increased self-esteem and goal-setting behavior. One home visitor feels that the respect and attention given to parents by the project staff helps parents show more interest in their own interests and goals. According to staff, parents are also gaining knowledge about their children's learning styles and the importance of social skills and emotional health. Among the other impacts staff notice are parents' decreasing impatience with their children during play groups, parents' incorporating child development goals into their interactions, and that the program has prompted parents to become more involved in their children's education. Additionally, staff report that school officials note increased parent involvement in the public schools, such as attendance at parent-teachers meetings, conferences, and other activities.

Another important impact has been the increase in the number of parents obtaining GEDs. According to staff, in the last three years, 14 individuals have obtained their GEDs, 9 of whom have been Even Start parents. In the ten years prior to the Even Start program, there were only three GED recipients at the learning center. There has also been an increase in the number of books being checked out of the learning center library.

Impacts on children reported by staff include improved relationships with each other, knowledge of numbers and letters, and appreciable gains in school-readiness skills. Staff report that parents also are able to see impacts on children and identify differences among their children who attended programs such as Head Start and Even Start and those who did not.

Program Features Most Important to its Success

Parenting education is considered by many to be crucial to the program's success because it helps parents deal with their children more positively and effectively and helps them to make better decisions for themselves and their children. Staff report that the adult education component is also a very important feature of the program because through it parents are continuing their education, becoming more literate, and gaining the basic skills needed for college classes or employment.

Challenges Faced by Project

One tribal leader reported that major challenges facing the tribe are economic diversification and education. According to this council member, this is a two-fold problem

involving both education and economic development. This member reported, "We need to find ways to exist in the 1990s without losing any more of our cultural values." The tribe wants to expand the economy on the reservation without losing the Makah identity or traditional values. Maintaining the Makah culture and language is of critical importance to tribal members and the community is very proud of its Makah Cultural and Research Center. Tribal members report that the discovery of the 500-year-old buried village and the construction of the museum has been a source of cultural renewal for the tribe.

Another challenge for the tribe is working with the school district to stop the downturn in academic skills found in third-grade children on the reservation, particularly in reading and language arts skills. According to the Even Start director, the tribe has been able to document through testing the positive impact that Head Start has had in increasing school readiness among children transitioning to kindergarten. However, by the time the Makah children reach the third grade, their test scores indicate that they are one to two years behind their peers.

A major challenge reported by project staff is the lack of space for the project and the need for a facility that can accommodate all of the staff offices, provide space for supplies and project materials, and enable the project to have integrated and center-based activities. Communication and networking between the adult education components and other project services is especially difficult with project staff working in separate buildings.

Staff also report that when the project began, conducting home visits was a challenge; many parents forgot appointments or were hesitant to receive home-based services because they did not know what to expect or did not fully understand the purpose. Helping participants to believe in themselves and to overcome some of their fears is another challenge. One staff reports that the reservation provides so many social services that some families become intergenerationally dependent, and fears of leaving the reservation may prevent them from reaching their goals.

Staff also are disappointed with the lack of American Indian educational books, toys, and materials that are commercially available. In addition, staff feel that there are few resources and curriculum materials for tribal Even Start programs. Staff would like more help and input from the U.S. Department of Education, especially in areas of curriculum design and resource materials. Staff also feel that they have benefitted from talking with other tribal Even Start programs and would like help from the Department to facilitate this communication at national meetings (e.g., separate meetings for tribal Even Start project staff).

Staff also report frustration in being required to coordinate with the school district's Title I program but not being able to count Title I monies as a portion of the required local cost share for Even Start program funds. Due to the nature of their program, they are not part of the school district and are less integrated with Title I than other non-Indian programs. The reservation has

very limited resources and the project would either like to use Title I monies as a part of its local cost share[4] or to have the escalating cost share requirement removed.

[4]The 1994 reauthorization of the Even Start Program allows Even Start projects to count Title I (previously Chapter 1) federal funds toward the local cost share.

Chapter Five

PASCUA YAQUI EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

The Pascua Yaqui Even Start project is administered by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe based on a reservation southwest of Tucson, Arizona. The Pascua Yaquis are a community whose descendants resided several thousand years ago in an area that is now Mexico (Molina, undated). After years of persecution and oppression from the Spanish and, later, the Mexican government, large numbers of Yaquis fled Mexico and moved to southwest Arizona around 1900 (Miller, 1994). Within 20 years there were estimated to be more than 2,000 Yaquis living in southwest Arizona (Molina, undated). By the 1960s, however, many Yaquis were living in poverty under crowded conditions, and Yaqui leaders began lobbying for land on which to develop a new community.

In 1964, Congress passed a bill that gave the Pascua Yaqui Association, a newly formed non-profit organization, 202 acres of desert land about 15 miles southwest of Tucson (Miller, 1994). With aid from the Office of Economic Opportunity, local churches, and volunteer organizations, the Yaquis began construction on the reservation. However, by the mid-1970s, construction was stopped and the community's goals were jeopardized by a host of problems such as diminishing funds, legal questions about the status of the land, building code issues, and the ineligibility of Yaqui families to qualify for bank loans. A major factor in these obstacles was their lack of federal recognition as an Indian tribe which would have made them eligible for services and funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other government agencies.

With lobbying efforts by Yaqui leaders and the support of several key politicians, the Pascua Yaquis were federally recognized as an Indian tribe in 1978 (Miller, 1994). In 1994, the Yaquis were recognized as an historical tribe. Recognition brought many positive changes, including immediate assistance from the BIA and other government agencies and an increase of 4,000 Yaquis who met the eligibility criteria for tribal membership. Within a few years, housing and other services were established on the reservation and the Pascua Yaqui reservation was on its way to further development.

As of 1995, there are approximately 3,000 Yaquis residing on the reservation. An additional 7,000 Yaquis are living in Arizona, primarily in Guadalupe and two areas of Tucson: Old Pascua and the 39th street area. Other Yaquis are reported to be scattered throughout the United States but the largest concentration continues to be in Arizona.

Currently, the Yaqui tribe is self-governing and administered by a tribal council consisting of a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, and nine council members. Major service components on the reservation include: education, health, social services, and employment and

training. Within each of these components are a variety of related services and projects such as an alternative high school, adult education classes, tutoring, a school liaison program, home health visits, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, child welfare services counseling, elderly services, and vocational training. Other services on the reservation include HUD Indian housing, a police department, and a fire department. The local community college provides Yaqui language and college classes; the local adult education agency provides GED and ESL classes for members of the tribe.

The tribe's education department is one of the key service providers and currently has 22 employees, a huge increase from a few years ago when there were only three employees. The department's growth is due to revenue from the tribe's casino as well as from new grants and sources of funding. The tribe tries to support higher education as much as possible and provides tuition money for members in school. One staff member estimates that about 50 percent of Yaquis living on the reservation are taking classes. In addition, the tribe's casino requires that all employees have a high school diploma or GED and sponsors GED classes for employees without high school diplomas. The tribe is planning to build an education building on the reservation next year to enable it to expand education services and establish a K-12 school along with alternative holistic education programs on the reservation.

Characteristics of Community Served

The project serves the Pascua Yaqui Indians living on the reservation. The reservation is located in a rural desert community that is reported to have a high rate of violence, gang activity, property crime, and personal assault. The reservation also has its share of problems and challenges such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse. The high school dropout rate on the reservation averages about 60 percent.

The tribe is the major employer for Yaquis living on the reservation, and the economy on the reservation underwent major changes when the tribe opened a casino four years ago. The casino employs about 500 people and brought an increase in employment opportunities and much needed revenue to the Yaquis. The tribe also operates a bingo hall, an adobe home construction company, a smoke shop selling tax-free tobacco products, and a nursery selling shrubs and plants. Despite the employment opportunities offered by the tribe and the increased revenue brought in by the casino, the unemployment and poverty rates on the reservation are still high. The unemployment rate is currently about 60 percent, which is down from 84 percent four years ago before the casino opened.

Yaqui children attend four local public schools operated by the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). The Yaquis have a history of conflict with the public schools which Even Start staff believe is due to past prejudice and unfair treatment of Yaqui students. According to staff, the schools only minimally support Yaqui culture and tradition and incorporate very little Yaqui language or culture into their classes. The tribe and the school district have programs designed to increase parent involvement in the school but participation from the parents on the reservation

is limited. One reason noted for the limited parent involvement in the schools is the past negative experiences of the parents in the public schools. Another reason is that many parents now work at the casino and have less time to spend at their children's school.

Land on the reservation is owned by the Yaqui tribe and held in trust for its members. Tribal members can purchase homes, and most families own their own homes; others live in rental units administered through HUD Indian housing. Mortgages are available through HUD and are based on income. Much of the housing on the reservation is old and substandard, but the tribe is currently building new houses at the edge of the reservation. There is very little mobility off of the reservation and, in recent years, the number of families living on the reservation has increased as new housing is constructed through HUD Indian housing and tribal funds. Currently, there is a waiting list of approximately six years to live on the reservation. Staff report that families are drawn to the reservation because of the opportunities for housing, employment, and the many services offered by the tribe. The Yaquis are planning to expand the reservation with recently acquired land.

The Yaquis have a very strong cultural background and belief system, which incorporates elements of Christianity as a result of the early influences of Jesuit missionaries in Mexico. The Yaquis also are a tri-lingual tribe; the majority of members speak English, many speak Spanish and a few, mostly the elders, speak Yaqui. Yaqui is the tribe's own language and written alphabet, but very few tribal members can read or speak it. To regain some of this lost linguistic heritage, the Yaqui alphabet is incorporated into the Even Start early childhood and parenting components and is also provided through adult education classes on the reservation.

The Even Start project currently serves 27 families. About 75 percent of the families participating in the Even Start project are two-parent families, the remainder are single mothers with children. About 80 percent of the Even Start fathers work, and about 50 percent of the mothers work either full- or part-time. About two-thirds of the parents have their high school diploma or GED.

Recruitment of Families

In addition to the Even Start eligibility criteria stated in the legislation, the Yaqui Even Start project has three other requirements for participation: a family must have one or more children 3 to 5 years old; a parent must be a member of the Yaqui tribe; and the family must live on the reservation.

Recruitment has not been a problem for the project because families are reported to be very interested in participating in the project. When the project first began, staff used a variety of techniques to recruit families. One of the first steps was to review the list of families in Head Start and begin contacting eligible parents. Other methods included community announcements, home visits, and telephone calls to prospective families. Word-of-mouth about the project spread quickly, and relatives and other community members began coming forward to participate.

According to staff, talking with parents face-to-face obtained the highest response. Due to lack of additional space for the early childhood services, the project does not plan to accept any new families for Even Start services. Staff hope to expand services when the project moves into the new education building next year.

Staff

Staff Positions

The Even Start staff consists of a project coordinator, three family education specialists, a part-time child care worker, and a project secretary. All of the staff are female, all are American Indians, and all but one are members of the Yaqui tribe. Several of the staff live on the reservation, others live in nearby areas. In hiring the staff, Indian preference is used, meaning that the position is announced within the tribe before being announced to the general community. Yaqui language preference and knowledge of Yaqui culture and traditions also are taken into account in the hiring decisions. In addition, according to the project coordinator, experience, personality, and the ability to work with children and families are more important factors in the hiring process than education level.

The project coordinator has been with the Even Start project since it began in 1992. Previously, she had worked for five years for the Tucson Unified School District and for the tribe's education department in education services on the reservation. Her experience includes working in classrooms, tutoring, student outreach, and dropout prevention with teenagers. She has a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology and a background in art. Currently, she is attending classes to obtain her teaching credentials in elementary education.

The project coordinator is responsible for coordinating all early childhood, adult education, and parenting education services. In this role, she oversees all Even Start activities, supervises the staff, manages the budget, collaborates with outside agencies, and coordinates parent activities. In addition, the coordinator assists the teachers in the preschool classes and provides transportation for children and adults to and from home and classes.

The three family education specialists have a range of education and work experiences. All of the family education specialists have high school diplomas. Additional education experiences of the specialists vary; one of the specialists is a recent college graduate, another has a child development associate (CDA) certificate and a nursing certificate, and the third is working on her CDA. Their combined related experience includes raising their own children, foster parenting, home health care, volunteering in schools, and working in agencies and programs such as Head Start, the library, homeless shelters, and an arts programs.

The family education specialists provide early childhood education classes three days a week, conduct home visits, plan and lead parent activities, and provide general advocacy for families. The family education specialists work in teams during the home visit; one specialist

works with the parent or other adult family member and the other works with the child. Their roles, however, are not fixed and they take turns working with parents and children.

The project secretary is primarily responsible for providing clerical support. However, she also drives Even Start parents to adult education classes and fills in as an assistant teacher in the Even Start early childhood classes when needed. The child care worker works half-time for the project and half-time for the Tucson Unified School District.

The instructor who teaches the adult education classes during the day for Even Start is an employee of a local adult education agency. She recently received her master's degree in English-as-a-second language and has been teaching a few months.

Staff Support Services

Staff receive the majority of training through outside workshops and conferences. The coordinator and the family education specialists attend at least three or four training sessions a year. Some of these events are held out of state and sponsored by national organizations such as the National Indian Education Association. Other training activities are offered through local organizations such as the University of Arizona in Tucson, the Tucson Unified School District, the local community college, and social service providers. Training topics have included family literacy, curriculum development, retention strategies, learning disabilities, first aid, working with parents, classroom management, and child development. In addition to the training provided by outside agencies, the Even Start staff report that they each bring to the project different perspectives and experiences and that they learn a lot from each other.

The project coordinator supervises the three family education specialists in a group meeting held twice a month. The meetings usually last about three hours and include discussions about project goals, problems or issues with specific families or children, project activities, scheduling issues, and project supplies. In addition to the formal meetings, the staff frequently meet with the project coordinator and each other on an informal basis because they are located in the same building.

Staff turnover at the project is not reported to be a problem. The project coordinator and one of the family education specialists have been with the project since it began in 1992. The other two family education specialists were hired when the original staff left the project--one after two years and the other in the summer of 1995.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

The project provides services in early childhood education, parenting education, and adult education. Early childhood services and parenting services are provided by the Even Start staff and adult education services are provided through a local community college and a local adult education agency. The project also provides child care and transportation.

The Even Start project is located on the reservation in a small five-room house converted into offices and space for group activities. The main room is used as a reception area, staff meeting area, and early childhood classroom. Two other rooms are used for staff offices and two rooms at the back of the house are used for early childhood classes. One of the early childhood rooms has a table and chairs for the children and is used for meals, snacks, and some structured activities. The room also contains a sink, a refrigerator, and the staff's coffee pot and supplies. The second room contains a large area rug and is used as a playroom and group activity room. Both rooms are decorated with posters and examples of the Yaqui language along with bookcases and bookshelves filled with books and toys. The project also has a small outdoor play area in the backyard with playground equipment. Although the project's location is very convenient for families, the limited space restricts the number of families that the project can serve and, to some extent, the services that they can provide.

Early Childhood Education

The project provides early childhood education classes three days a week for children three to five years of age. The classes are held in the classrooms in the Even Start building; the project operates both a morning and an afternoon session, each approximately three hours long. Two teachers and an assistant teacher lead each class; two of the family education specialists act as teachers and the third specialist and the project coordinator act as assistants. (After further training, the third specialist will become a full teacher.) The family education specialists design and develop the curriculum on their own with minimal supervision from the project coordinator. They rely on their experience and creativity and make very limited use of commercially designed materials. The classes focus on socialization skills, motor skills, the Yaqui language, and concepts such as shapes, colors, and numbers.

The typical schedule for the early childhood program begins with the staff picking up the children at their homes and bringing them to the Even Start building. The first activity is usually journal writing, followed by a group activity called circle time, and then outdoor play. The program also includes time when the children work at different activity centers and have either breakfast or a snack (depending upon the session). The program usually ends with a story, and the staff drive the children back to their homes. The project follows a semi-structured schedule two out of the three days of the week. The last day of the week is less formal, with more time for socialization and play.

Parenting Education

The project holds parent meetings once a month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for Even Start parents and members of their extended families. Activities during these meetings include discussing project services, fundraising, parenting education, and presentations on relevant topics. Parent activities also are held once or twice a month, and sometimes the parent meetings are held in conjunction with a parenting activity or workshop. Parent activities include first aid classes, cooking or beading demonstrations, and workshops focusing on topics such as early childhood education, health, and nutrition. Staff sometimes lead the workshops themselves or bring in

someone from the tribal community with expertise in the subject being discussed. Even Start parents also occasionally lead workshops or give presentations on different skills, such as beading or sewing.

An Early Childhood Class

It is mid-morning on a Thursday and 12 children are seated on a large area rug in the children's playroom in the Even Start building. The room contains bookshelves with books and toys and is decorated with colorful posters and examples of words in the Yaqui language.

Since it is Thursday, the activities are less structured than usual. The children are singing songs and doing exercises to music from a record player. Following this activity, one of the family education specialists passes out name cards printed with each child's name; the children call out the names printed on each card as they are given out. When all of the name cards are distributed, the children take turns holding up their cards and introducing themselves in Yaqui. The next activity uses small multi-colored cut-out shapes. One of the children leads the activity by holding up different cut-outs and the class identifies each color in Yaqui. After about ten minutes, the group moves on to a sing-a-long. The tunes are in English and in Yaqui, and the children choose the songs that they would like to sing. The children also recite the alphabet in English and count to ten in Yaqui.

After about 30 minutes of activity in the playroom, the children go outdoors. While outside, the children divide into several small groups, each focusing on a particular activity, such as painting at easels, making clay figures, playing in the sandbox, or climbing on the playground equipment. The staff spread out among the children, each supervising one or two groups.

Parenting education also takes place during home visits that family education specialists try to conduct with each family at least once a month for 30 minutes to an hour, more often if there are problems or issues to discuss. The staff meet with both mothers and fathers or members of the extended family, depending upon who is home during the scheduled time. Staff bring materials with them to the home visits for the parent and child, such as parenting articles or magazines for the parent and instructional, activity-based materials that the parent and child can do together. Often the material corresponds to and complements what the children are learning in class. The family education specialists conduct home visits in teams of two; one specialist usually talks with the mother about the child, family issues, or project activities while the other specialist focuses her attention on the child.

The project conducts monthly field trips for Even Start families, including younger siblings, to places and events in the community. Trips have included visits to the zoo, the theater, community celebrations, local social service provider activities, and museums. The project also conducts a library group every other week and provides transportation to the local public library for parents and children.

A Home Visit

Two family education specialists are conducting a home visit with a single mother and her two young daughters, who are 4 and 7 years old. The mother works full-time and is making plans to get married. The family lives in a relatively new home on the reservation. The family has been in Even Start for two years, and the 4-year-old participates regularly in the early childhood classes. According to staff, the mother has already accomplished her education goals and no longer participates in adult education. Due to her work schedule, she also has limited time to attend parent meetings and activities.

This is a routine home visit for this family and the staff bring a packet of materials with them. One specialist sits on the couch with the mother discussing project activities and looking at a parenting magazine, discussing games and materials that the mother can order. The conversation turns to the child's progress, and the specialist reports that the child has been distracted lately in class. The mother does not appear concerned and notes that her youngest daughter is always easily distracted and gives a few examples of recent behavior at home. The mother asks about her daughter's knowledge of numbers, and staff assure the mother that her daughter is young and not expected to know them yet.

In the meantime, the other family education specialist is sitting on the floor with the four-year-old, engaging her in conversation about the different colors and sizes of the cut-out shapes that the specialist has brought with her. The seven-year-old is sitting at the kitchen table doing homework but occasionally talks with the staff member working with her younger sister.

Weekly play groups also are offered for children and parents through a local parenting organization, but currently there are no Even Start families participating in these activities. Staff report that the high number of working parents and time constraints may be a reason for lack of participation of Even Start families.

Services for fathers of Even Start children also are provided periodically through a program called the Fathers' Forum. The program provides an opportunity for fathers to come together and participate in group activities, workshops, and discussions about issues that concern them. One of the program's goals is to encourage fathers to become more involved in their children's education.

Adult Education

Adult education services are provided through a local community college and a local adult education agency and held during the day at a local community building and in the evenings on the reservation. Classes are open to all Yaquis as well as members of the surrounding communities. Adult education classes offered by the adult education agency include GED preparation, adult basic education (ABE), and beginning and advanced English-as-a-second language (ESL) classes.

An ESL Class

The beginner ESL class is taking place on Thursday morning in a classroom of an old school that has been converted to a community wellness center. The classroom is spacious and filled with tables, chairs, and shelves with books and materials. Colorful posters and construction paper with common English phrases are taped to the front wall. There are 18 students in the class, 3 men and 15 women; most appear to be in their mid-30s. One of the women is an Even Start participant. The instructor is a young woman employed by the local adult education agency.

The skill levels of the students in the class are divided into four groups and the instructor tries to accommodate all groups during the class. The first class activity is an exercise in which the students are given strips of paper with common questions written in English (e.g., Where do you live?, How old is your dog?). The students write their questions on the blackboard, and the instructor calls upon different students to answer each question aloud in English. The students seem familiar with the exercise; some answer the questions easily while others have difficulty with some of the grammar.

As the second half of the class begins, the instructor directs each student to select an item from a basket. The items are common items such as sunglasses, pencils, key rings, and books. The instructor leads the class in a game that focuses on using prepositions. The students take turns stating the location of different items (e.g., "The book is on the table next to the keys.") In the next activity, the students are divided into pairs, a student with relatively good English skills paired with a less skilled student. The students are asked to tell their partner (in English) where to put the items. The students appear very involved in the exercise. As the level of difficulty of the exercise increases, the students often have to try a few times in order to give a correct response.

The students attending the adult education classes are at different levels, and the instructor tries to gear activities toward all members of the classes. The community college offers college classes and a Yaqui language class on the reservation (which is taught by one of the Even Start family education specialists).

Beginning ESL classes are two hours long and offered twice a week. The majority of ESL students speak Spanish and are from Mexico. The instructor uses a curriculum guide developed by the county as a reference for instruction but does not follow a structured program. Activities focus on grammar, vocabulary, and general conversation. The classes are flexible and include class discussions and small-group exercises. The instructor plans on a week-to-week basis, and activities are geared toward practical situations and student needs. The advanced ESL classes also are two hours long and are offered four times a week. The classes include advanced grammar and reading materials, such as newspapers, magazines, and things of interest to Tucson residents. The students also spend one class period each week in a computer lab.

Adults participating in the ABE classes are assessed with the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). ABE classes are held twice a week; students spend one day on math and one day on language. The math classes include class lectures, discussions, and workbook exercises. The instructor uses *Number Power* published by Contemporary Books, Inc. The language classes do not follow a prescribed curriculum or published program, but classes focus on reading, writing, and vocabulary. Students are encouraged to bring in topics of interest to read or discuss. Class reading material includes newspaper and magazine articles and short stories.

Participants in the adult education classes range in age from 16 to 55 years, with most in their 30s. Both men and women participate in the classes, but the majority of students are women.

Support Services

About half of the families have their own cars, and public transportation also is available so transportation is not a major problem on the reservation. In addition, the project has a van and provides transportation for children to the early childhood program. Staff also provide transportation for parents by van or private automobile to adult education classes and community activities. The project also has limited use of several vans owned by the tribe to transport parents and children to activities.

Child care is provided by the project's part-time child care worker during adult education classes and parent activities. Care generally is provided for children from birth to age seven, but staff report that sometimes older children participate as well.

Coordination of Service Components

Early childhood education and parenting education services are linked in several ways. Even Start staff provide both services so there is a great deal of joint planning and coordination of activities that include aspects of both early childhood education and parenting education. In addition, home visits combine early childhood education and parenting education activities. Staff work with the child and the parent during visits, and many activities are provided for the child and parent to work on together.

There is limited coordination, however, between adult education and early childhood and parenting components. The adult education classes are provided by staff from a local community college and a local adult education agency, and there are no formal arrangements or agreements between Even Start and these education agencies. In addition, communication between Even Start staff and the adult education instructors is minimal. Staff do not coordinate with the instructors, but they do discuss the classes with parents and are aware of attendance because they provide transportation to the daytime classes.

The tribe is the Even Start grantee and is reported to be very supportive of the project. As a result, Even Start has access to many tribal services, and coordination with tribal departments is fairly easy. In addition, the community is very close-knit and because many employees of the tribe also are members of the tribe, Even Start staff know many of the people with whom they are coordinating services for families.

The Even Start staff do not meet formally with any collaborating agencies in the community, but they do attend regularly scheduled meetings held by the tribe. For example, they attend the monthly tribal employee meeting for all employees of the tribe's various businesses and service departments. Staff also participate in youth collaborative meetings held twice a month for representatives from tribal departments providing services to children and youth. Even Start staff also attend meetings held by the tribe's education department.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

Staff report that most families are interested in participating in Even Start and receiving services. Very few families drop out of the project prematurely. However, some families are on the waiting list for Head Start and leave Even Start when Head Start has an opening. Staff report that other families choose to remain in Even Start because the project offers services not offered by Head Start, such as home visits, parenting education, and family-centered activities.

Most families remain in Even Start until their child graduates from the early childhood classes. Fifty percent of the families are new this year; three out of the 27 families have children of different ages who have been participating in the project since it began three years ago. Requirements for families to remain in the project include: the child's participation in the early childhood classes; participation in home visits; and the parent's participation in five to ten hours of project activities each month, such as attending parent meetings, field trips, parent workshops, adult education classes, and volunteering in the early childhood classes. About five parents regularly volunteer in the early childhood classes, assisting the teachers and helping with activities.

Twenty-seven children attend the early childhood classes, 13 in the morning and 14 in the afternoon, and classes are usually full. Participation in home visits and parent activities also is high and often extended family members participate in activities if the parents are unable to attend. This is especially true for the monthly field trip, when it is not unusual for 50 or 60 people to

participate. Staff report that participation in the monthly parent meetings could be better; about ten parents usually attend the meetings. Staff feel that the low attendance is due to work or other obligations that parents have rather than a lack of interest.

Increasing participation in the adult education classes is a challenge for the project. Last year, ten Even Start parents participated in adult education classes. This year, four parents are attending classes; two attend ESL classes and two attend ABE classes. Several Even Start parents also are attending the Yaqui language classes offered on the reservation. Staff from the reservation and the community feel that there are several reasons for the low attendance of Even Start parents in adult education. One reason is that about half of the parents have a high school diploma or GED. For the parents without their high school diploma or GED, employment may be more of a priority than education. Staff feel that some parents also may avoid classes due to prejudice and bias in their past educational experiences.

Attendance at all Even Start activities is recorded and staff are very aware of families' participation levels since staff conduct all of the early childhood and parenting activities and drive participants to adult education classes in the community.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

The local evaluator collects project statistics on families' participation in Even Start classes and activities. The project coordinator provides written reports and updates on project activities and plans that the evaluator summarizes and includes in local evaluation reports.

Project staff keep written records of attendance at early childhood classes and project activities and the project coordinator collects all of the necessary data and records it on the ESIS forms A and B. The project did not complete any of the ESIS forms for the 1994-95 program year due to technical difficulties with their computer and a misunderstanding about the data submission deadline. The project coordinator reports that the ESIS forms are fairly simple to use and the only difficulty that they have encountered has been technical problems with the computer.

Staff do not find the ESIS inappropriate for the American Indian population but feel that many of the questions are not reflective of their culture and values. For example, the evaluation asks about parents reading to their children. However, for the Yaquis, storytelling and sharing information about Yaqui culture and tradition is more important than reading books. Staff estimate that about 40 percent of parents read to their children but about 80 percent tell them stories.

Conclusions and Lessons

Program Impacts

According to staff, an important impact of the project on children has been increased knowledge of the Yaqui language and pride in the Yaqui culture. Staff feel that the children need a strong cultural background and Yaqui identity in order to do well outside of the reservation. Another important impact reported for children is increased school readiness and socialization skills.

Staff report a major impact of the project on parents is increased self-esteem and increased confidence to voice concerns, ask questions, and pursue their dreams and goals. In addition, parents are more aware of their children's education and are becoming more involved in school meetings and activities. Staff report that parents are less intimidated by teachers and the school system and are asking questions and raising issues. Other impacts on parents reported by staff are increased exposure to the outside community through project activities and increased motivation to learn the Yaqui language as their children do.

Program Features Most Important to its Success

One of the most important project features noted by staff is the early childhood component. Staff feel that teaching children language and social skills is very important and teaching the Yaqui language has helped children to develop pride in the Yaqui culture and their background. Staff also feel that the holistic approach of the project of involving both parents and children works well with American Indian families. In addition, the triangular approach of the project that focuses on the teacher, the parent, and the child is considered an important feature. Other important features of the project reported by staff are the project's convenient location to the families and parent activities that help to reduce isolation.

Challenges Faced by the Project

A number of challenges are reported to be facing the tribe that also affect project families, such as economic development, isolation from the community, cultural barriers, racism in the community against Indians, conflict with the public schools, substance abuse, and poverty.

One of the biggest challenges for the Yaquis is dealing with the influences and opposing culture outside of the reservation. Many Yaquis are isolated on the reservation by choice and are hesitant to become involved in the outside community because of cultural barriers and past negative experiences.

Another major challenge for the Yaquis is dealing with the public school system. The staff feel that the schools have a history of bias and harsh treatment of Yaqui students. Many of the problems stem from a lack of awareness of Yaqui culture by school administrators and teachers. For example, one Even Start staff member talked about how Yaqui children are taught to be humble and respectful of others. As a result, many Yaqui children are less verbal and competitive

than other classmates and, therefore, may not get as much attention in the classroom as other children. Although 65 percent of the students in the public schools are Yaqui, there are very few Yaqui teachers or administrators. The tribe has addressed this issue in the past through work with the TUSD to implement a Yaqui/English bilingual education program in grades K-5 but the struggles continue.

A major challenge for the Even Start project is inadequate space and facilities. Staff report being cramped in the Even Start building and not being able to serve more families due to limited space.

Increasing participation in the adult education component represents another challenge for staff due to the Yaqui's negative history with the public schools. In addition, many parents are intimidated by the community beyond the reservation due to cultural and language barriers. For example, staff report that people communicate differently in the outside community. American Indians are known to think very carefully before speaking and, therefore, may take longer to respond to questions. All of these issues contribute to parents' reluctance to attend adult education classes and to spend more time in the outside community.

In general, staff are positive about the project's future, especially with a new education building and increased space being planned. However, some future challenges noted by staff and community providers include increased dealing with violence in the younger grades and encouraging parents to obtain further education.

Chapter Six

EVALUATING TRIBAL EVEN START PROJECTS

This chapter begins with a review of the local evaluation activities taking place in the three tribal Even Start projects profiled in this report. The local evaluators were not present during our site visits, so information about the local evaluations is limited to what the project director reported or what we were able to learn from available local evaluation reports. The second section of the chapter contains a brief discussion of the concerns and questions expressed by these sites regarding the Even Start Information System (ESIS) that is being used to collect information for the national evaluation of the Even Start program.

Local Evaluation Activities

All three tribal Even Start projects employ independent evaluators to conduct local evaluations. The amount and type of data collected varies among the evaluators, depending upon the evaluators' plans for the local evaluation and his/her involvement with the project. However, in these three projects, data tend to focus on participation and description of sources rather than test scores or other standardized outcomes.

Common methods used by the local evaluators to gather information about the projects include talking with staff and participants, conducting surveys with staff and participants, collecting attendance statistics, reviewing project records, observing project activities, and reading reports prepared by staff. One local evaluator also adapted the ESIS forms to include additional items of interest for the local evaluation, such as the number of participants receiving driver's licenses.

These local evaluators also provide technical assistance to the projects. For example, one local evaluator is helping project staff write an operations manual and is designing procedures to monitor goals and participation data. Other local evaluators have made recommendations to help projects meet program objectives or improve project services.

Appropriateness of the ESIS

Two of the three projects visited report that they have been able to use the automated ESIS successfully and have not had any problems using the software or fulfilling the national evaluation requirements. Generally, it is the project staff, or in some cases the project director, who collect all of the intake and participation data necessary for the national evaluation and record the information on the ESIS forms.

Overall, staff in these three projects did not find the ESIS items to be inappropriate for the American Indian population, but they did have concerns that the national evaluation was not reflective of American Indian culture and values. Concerns and issues about the ESIS and the national evaluation from staff in the tribal Even Start projects include the following:

- The ESIS is directed more toward immigrant groups than to individuals born in the United States (e.g., the questions ask about years of education in the United States).

- Tribal affiliation is an important factor for American Indians, particularly in terms of entitlements and service eligibility, but the ESIS asks only about ethnicity.

- The ESIS does not take into consideration activities such as storytelling that are very important in American Indian culture. One project reported that many more of their parents tell stories to their children then read to them.

The Pascua Yaqui Even Start project had technical difficulties with their computer and a misunderstanding about data submission dates and did not complete any of the ESIS forms for the 1994-95 program year. The issues have since been corrected, and staff do not foresee future problems using the ESIS.

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY OF PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TRIBAL EVEN START PROJECTS

Introduction

In the previous chapters of this report, we described the specific challenges of each of the three tribal Even Start projects visited. In this chapter, we summarize the program services and participant characteristics of the projects. In addition, we present what project staff reported to be the major challenges in tribal Even Start projects and identify practices that are being implemented to address these challenges.

Summary of Three Tribal Even Start Projects

This section provides a summary of key project and participant characteristics of the three projects visited. Common themes across the three projects are highlighted and, where possible, comparisons are made to Even Start projects nationally.

Participant Characteristics

Exhibit 7.1 summarizes family structure, education level, and employment status of families in the three projects. It is important to keep in mind that the percentages listed in Exhibit 7.1 are not precise figures, but rather estimates provided by project staff during the site visits.

Exhibit 7.1

Participant Characteristics in Three Tribal Even Start Projects

SITE	FAMILY STRUCTURE	EDUCATION LEVELS	EMPLOYMENT STATUS
Cherokee Nation	65% couples with children 35% single parents	More than 50% of Indian adults in the project's service area did not finish high school; most project parents have reading skills between the 4th and 7th grade levels	13% unemployment rate for Cherokees in the two communities served by project
Makah Tribal Council	Majority couples with children	50% have high school diploma	70% of mothers are employed
Pascua Yaqui Tribe	75% couples with children 25% single parents	66% have high school diploma or GED	80% of fathers are employed 50% of mothers are employed

The majority of tribal Even Start parents in the three projects are couples with children. In the Pascua Yaqui project, 75 percent of parents are married or living with a partner. This family composition differs from the typical Even Start project, where only 48 percent of parents are couples living with children.

Parents' education level among participants in these tribal projects tends to be higher than among Even Start projects nationally. For example, two of the three projects reported that 50 percent or more of their participants have a high school diploma or GED.

We were able to obtain information on employment status as either the percentage of adults who are employed or the unemployment rate. The employment status varies somewhat among the three projects, but is still relatively high. The Pascua Yaqui and Makah tribes report high employment rates. Among the Pascua Yaqui, which operates a casino that provides many jobs, 80 percent of fathers are reported to be employed. In the Makah tribe, 70 percent of mothers are reported to be employed; staff from this project note that the local government and education programs are major sources of employment for women in the community. Among the Cherokees, there is a 13 percent unemployment rate, suggesting that the majority of adults also are employed there. Data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS) from the 1994-95 program year indicate that only 33 percent of Even Start parents nationally were employed at the end of the project year.

Taken together, the higher than average employment rates and the higher proportion of adults with a high school diploma or GED among these Even Start projects have implications for program services. Staff in a few programs indicated that parents are more interested in the parenting component than the adult education services, and program services reflect this interest. While all three projects provide adult education, the high percentage of participants with high school diplomas or GEDs may explain why staff reported low participation in adult education services.

The higher-than-average employment and education rates among participants also raise questions as to whether these projects are serving those most in need of services, as required by the Even Start legislation.

Project Characteristics

This section discusses characteristics of the three tribal projects visited, including: number of families served; program services in early childhood education, parenting education, and adult education; and special program features. A summary of this information is presented in Exhibit 7.2.

Exhibit 7.2

Characteristics of Three Tribal Even Start Projects

PROJECT	NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	PROGRAM SERVICES			SPECIAL PROGRAM FEATURES
		EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	PARENTING EDUCATION	ADULT EDUCATION	
Cherokee Nation	20	• Weekly home visits	• Weekly home visits • Monthly parent meetings	• Weekly home visits with focus on GED test preparation	Use Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)
Makah Tribal Council	20	• Play groups conducted at least once a week by age group (birth to three, three to five, and five to seven years old) • Home visits conducted every two weeks	• Home visits conducted every two weeks • Monthly parent meetings	• Adult basic education • GED classes • College classes • Computer instruction	Use Parent as Teacher (PAT) and Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) programs
Pascua Yaqui Tribe	27	• ECE classes provided three days a week • Monthly home visits	• Monthly home visits • Monthly parent meetings	• GED classes • Adult basic education • English-as-a-second-language (ESL)	Summer school program

The three tribal projects represented in this report serve between 20 and 27 families, which is a smaller number of families than the average among Even Start projects. Data from the Even Start Information System (ESIS) for the 1994-95 program year indicate that, on average, Even Start projects serve 62 families.

There are a number of reasons the tribal projects might serve fewer families than other Even Start projects. One factor might be the location of the Indian projects. Two of the three projects visited serve rural areas, and the third, the Cherokee Nation, serves both rural and urban areas. Among Even Start projects nationally, rural projects also tend to serve a smaller number of families (52 families) than projects in urban (70 families) or mixed communities (78 families). Another reason for the lower participant numbers among tribal projects may be that the Indian population tends to be more self-contained, with less mobility and fewer new immigrants than other communities. Staff from several tribal projects report that the majority of families have lived in the communities or reservations being served by Even Start for generations and few new families move into the area.

Many of the core services in early childhood education (ECE), parenting education and adult education are provided during home visits in these three projects. ECE services are delivered solely during home visits in the project run by the Cherokee Nation. In the Makah project, ECE is provided through both home visits and center-based programs.

Parenting education is provided through a combination of home visits and monthly parent meetings. The frequency of the home visits range from once a week to once a month, depending upon the project's design.

Adult education is provided primarily through home visits in the projects run by the Cherokee Nation Even Start, with an emphasis on GED test preparation. The other two projects offer a variety of center-based classes such as GED, computer training, adult basic education, and English-as-a-second language classes.

All Even Start projects are required to provide some core service activities though home-based instruction. The most common scenario is for projects to provide parenting education and parent-child activities during the home visits. Providing early childhood education and adult education during home visits is less common. Looking across the three tribal projects visited, we are struck by the greater reliance on home visits in all three core service areas. It is important to emphasize that these three projects are not necessarily representative of all tribal projects. However, there are a number of characteristics of these projects and the families they serve that might explain the greater use of home-based instruction.

The realities of geography and a lack of transportation options are two related reasons that home visits may be more appealing for Even Start projects on tribal lands. In the Cherokee project, the catchment area is very large and dispersed, with very limited public transportation. Thus, bringing project services to the families is more feasible than bringing parents and children together at a centralized location.

The Cherokee project also has more limited options for service provision by community agencies. Thus, center-based services by collaborating agencies are less likely than in other Even Start projects. In addition, some project staff reported that many tribal parents are reluctant to travel off-reservation to attend classes.

The communities on the reservations and tribal lands also seem to be very close-knit. Project staff generally know the families prior to any involvement with Even Start, and most staff members are from the same cultural heritage as the Even Start participants. In comparison, in other Even Start projects, parents may be wary of having project staff come to their homes or staff may be reluctant to travel to certain neighborhoods for home visits. In contrast, project staff at the tribal projects report that parents generally are very pleased to receive the individualized attention of a home visit. Thus, there does not seem to be reluctance by either the staff or the parents to conduct home visits. In fact, home visits may be the preferred mode of instruction for parents in the tribal projects.

Challenges and Responses

In our discussions with project and community agency staff associated with the three tribal Even Start projects highlighted in this report, we learned about a number of challenges and barriers that projects must overcome in order to address the needs of tribal families. Staff and community representatives also discussed the challenges facing the tribes and reservations that affect the Even Start projects and their participants. The diversity of the tribes and the Even Start projects is reflected in the variety of challenges that these communities and projects face. However, many of these challenges appear to cut across tribal projects in general. The major issues and challenges confronting tribal communities and Even Start projects described in this report are:

- preserving American Indian culture;
- encouraging involvement in educational activities in the larger community;
- overcoming poverty and the high rate of unemployment for American Indians;
- securing adequate space and facilities for Even Start project staff and services; and
- finding culturally relevant American Indian early childhood curriculum materials.

In the following sections, we describe these issues in more detail.

Preserving Tribal Culture

Project staff emphasize that American Indian culture is very rich in tradition, values, and spirituality. It has been a struggle to preserve this culture in light of past government policies of assimilation and such practices as removing Indian students from their families and communities by sending them to boarding schools. For many tribes, the result of these past policies and the movement of Indians off reservations is a generation of American Indians who are less knowledgeable about tribal history and language than their elders. This challenge continues for many American Indians who leave their communities for education and employment opportunities as well as for those who live within their tribal communities but work in the larger society.

Compounding this problem is the feeling that there is a lack of recognition for American Indian culture in the public schools, and that there are too few American Indian teachers in public or tribal schools. Many American Indian educators and parents would like public schools with American Indian students to provide a bicultural education for these students and incorporate

American Indian language, culture, and tradition into the lessons. American Indian educators also would like to see more public school teachers educated about American Indian learning styles.

Tribal communities confront the challenges of preserving tribal culture by offering adult education classes on tribal history, culture, and language to community members. Several tribes also address this issue by collaborating with the local public school system to develop bicultural programs and provide training on American Indian learning styles.

Some successful strategies that Even Start projects have used to reintegrate American Indian culture into their families' lives have included incorporating tribal language and tradition into the early childhood classes and parent programs. Many also feel that teaching children very early about their heritage is crucial in helping them to develop a strong American Indian identity and positive self-esteem. Staff at several projects report that when parents see their children learning their tribal language and singing tribal songs the parents are motivated to increase their own knowledge and understanding of their tribal language and history.

Encouraging Parent Involvement in Educational Activities

One of the biggest challenges for many American Indians as described by project staff is overcoming isolation from the larger society, yet at the same time dealing with the influences and opposing cultural forces outside of the reservation. Many American Indians are isolated on reservations by geography as well as by choice. Many tribal members also have faced past prejudice and bias in American society, especially in the public schools.

Even Start staff report that these past experiences affect parents' willingness to become involved in their children's schools. Even Start staff believe that these fears, combined with past negative school experiences, also prevent many Even Start parents from participating in adult education classes offered outside of the reservation.

Even Start staff report that American Indians differ from the general population in terms of speech, communication, and behavior. For example, staff report that American Indians are known to think very carefully before speaking and, therefore, may take longer to process information and respond. Staff note that these differences can cause many parents to be hesitant in their communication in the outside community and can lead parents to become intimidated in adult education classes. All of these issues contribute to parents' reluctance to attend adult education classes, become involved in their children's schools, and spend more time in the outside community.

Tribal communities and Even Start projects use a variety of strategies and practices to help participants deal with cultural barriers, especially when these obstacles affect parents' involvement in their children's education and their own participation in adult education classes. Strategies include: field trips into urban areas for families living on reservations or isolated areas; adult education classes on the reservation for adults living on or close to reservations; financial help for tribal employees and time off for education purposes; advocacy for parents with their children's

public schools; and encouragement for parents to become more involved in their children's education. One community also spoke of a plan for tribal employees to be given time off each week to spend in their children's school.

Poverty and High Unemployment Rate

Extreme poverty and high rates of unemployment are challenges for most American Indian communities and affects many Even Start families. One contributing factor is the geographic isolation of many reservations and the corresponding lack of employment opportunities. Another challenge for tribal organizations is how to strike a balance between encouraging progress and economic diversity while maintaining the tribe's cultural identity and traditions.

The response of the Even Start projects to the high poverty and unemployment rates within the American Indian community has been to encourage participants to pursue education and necessary training to obtain higher paying jobs. However, this is not always a solution because, depending upon where the reservation or project site is located, employment opportunities may not be available within commuting distance. Where possible, some tribes have responded to this problem by developing or expanding gaming operations such as bingo parlors and casinos. These enterprises generate revenue for the tribes and provide employment for tribal members. In addition, revenue from the gaming industry can be used to finance other tribal businesses, which increases employment opportunities and provides economic diversification.

Adequate Space and Facilities for Even Start Services

The lack of adequate space and facilities for project activities is a challenge for the tribal Even Start projects, as it is for other Even Start projects. One project is limited in the number of families that can be served by the amount of space available. For another project, the lack of sufficient office space to accommodate all of the project staff in one location has limited staff communication and collaboration across program components.

There are no easy solutions to a lack of space and facilities other than relocating, which two projects are planning to do. One alternative is to share space and facilities with other tribal or community programs such as Head Start.

Culturally Relevant Early Childhood Curriculum Materials

Some project staff are disappointed with the lack of commercially available early childhood curricula, books, toys, and education materials that are relevant to the American Indian culture. Staff also report that the limited American Indian education resources that are available focus on general Indian practices and culture and are not specific enough to their tribe.

Tribal Even Start project staff respond to the limited culturally relevant education materials by revising and adapting materials to reflect the American Indian culture and, in some cases, the specific culture and language of their tribe. This is a time-consuming process, particularly

because many of the younger generation of American Indians have limited knowledge of their tribe's native language. For tribes that have a strong cadre of elders, this older generation serves as an important human resource, translating materials and serving as project advisors and mentors to Even Start staff. Staff also feel that help and input from the Department of Education, especially in areas of curriculum design and resource materials, would be useful.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REFERENCES

Hodgkinson, Harold L., Outtz, Janice H., and Obarakpor, Anita M. (1990). *The demographics of American Indians*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.

Miller, Mark E. (1994). The Yaquis become American Indians. *The Journal of Arizona History*. 35(1), 1994.

Molina, Felipe. (undated). *Yoeme History, Yaqui Indians*. Yaqui Indian Tribe Information Packet.

Nolan, George. (1992). Chairman's preface. *Building for the Future: A Blueprint for Change*. Final Report of the National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Reeves, M.S. (1989). The high cost of endurance. *Education Week* (Special Report), 2: 2-4.

Russell, George. (1993). *The American Indian Digest*. Phoenix, Arizona: Thunderbird Enterprises.

Szasz, Margaret C. (1991). Current conditions in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. *Indian Nations At Risk Task Force*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 755)

Urban Indian Education. Indian nations at risk task force: Summary reports for 18 INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions. (October, 1990). National Indian Education Association 22nd Annual Conference, San Diego, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 341 537)

APPENDIX A

TOPIC GUIDE AND OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR TRIBAL EVEN START SITE VISITS

TOPIC GUIDE FOR TRIBAL EVEN START SITE VISITS

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW *(tribal leader, project director)*

Description of grantee: administrative structure, leadership, relationship to outside communities, relationship to Even Start project, grantee's major service components (e.g., education, health care, parenting, etc.)

Overview of Even Start project: staffing, program components, enrollment, special emphasis of project

Number and location of Even Start project sites, physical description of facilities

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY SERVED *(tribal leader, project director)*

Description of reservation and community: urbanicity, economics, size, population, ethnicity, housing situation, major industry and employers, challenges facing reservation and community

Characteristics of Even Start American Indian families: tribal affiliations, languages spoken, household composition, mobility, percent living on reservation, education level, participants' attitudes toward education for their children and themselves

Other family programs, adult basic education, schools and preschool programs in the community serving American Indian families and their relationship to Even Start

C. RECRUITMENT OF FAMILIES *(project director)*

Eligibility requirements: criteria for Even Start, additional criteria for tribal Even Start projects, factors used to determine families "most in need"

Techniques used to recruit families: staff involved, activities used, involvement of tribal council, school district or other collaborating agencies

Effectiveness of strategies: reaching recruitment goals, overall effectiveness, successes and difficulties in recruiting families

D. STAFF *(project director/project staff/consultants/collaborating agency staff)*

Staff Positions

Paid staff per site: number, types (professional or paraprofessional), roles and responsibilities, full-time or part-time, location, how they spend their time (e.g., administrative versus service delivery), responsibilities exclusive to Even Start or work with other programs and families, staff

qualifications (e.g., education background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in parenting education, adult education, early childhood education, community services, American Indian culture/issues)

Consultants/staff from community agencies providing Even Start services per site: number, type, role, responsibilities, full-time or part-time, paid by Even Start or community agency, staff qualifications (e.g., education background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in parenting education, adult education, early childhood education, community services, American Indian culture/issues)

Volunteer staff per site: number, types, roles and responsibilities, time commitment, staff qualifications (e.g., educational background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in parenting education, adult education, early childhood education, community services, American Indian culture/issues)

Staff Support Services and Issues

In-service training: frequency, topics, duration, location, providers, specific training in working with low-income, low-literate or American Indian families, types of training most helpful

Staff supervision: providers, structure (group or individual), frequency, focus of discussion

Staff turnover: amount of turnover, has it been a problem, strategies for reducing turnover

E. CONTENT/DELIVERY OF EVEN START SERVICES (for each core service)
(project director, project staff, consultants, collaborating agency staff)

Brief description of core service: nature of service/instruction; individual or group, Even Start only or mixed groups, participation rates, members of families involved, ages of children involved

Location of services: center or home. If center--type of site, number of sites, number of rooms, description of space, shared or used only by Even Start, changes in location since program inception, adequacy of space for program needs If home--advantages and disadvantages, availability/adequacy of space in home, changes since start of program

Schedule: daily/weekly activities schedule, frequency and duration of services, variation over the year

Curriculum materials and instructional methods: types, locally developed, commercially available, sensitivity to American Indian culture, language and skill level, special emphasis of materials

Advantages and disadvantages of curriculum and instructional methods; particularly effective materials or instructional practices; changes since start of project

F. COORDINATION OF SERVICE COMPONENTS *(project director)*

Links among adult education, parenting education and early childhood education (e.g., staff, curriculum, training, staff planning); opportunities for parent-child activities

Relationship between Even Start and collaborating agencies: formal or informal arrangements, referral process and procedures, frequency and type of communication (e.g., discussions about families, hiring staff, scheduling decisions, curriculum decisions), joint training, shared events

G. SUPPORT SERVICES *(project director)*

Transportation: where and when provided, type (e.g., Even Start van, bus tokens, school buses, private cars with reimbursement, private staff cars), frequency and schedule of transportation, availability during core services, problems encountered and solutions tried

Child care: offered on-site or at another location (if so, where), ages of children served, child care for siblings available, description of site, hours of operation, availability during core services

Other services (e.g., health care, advocacy, meals, translation)

H. PARTICIPATION AND FOLLOW-UP STRATEGIES *(project director)*

Length of time average adult and child participates in services per site; participation requirements; policy on open entry/exit

Attendance practices: procedures to track attendance, follow-up of absences, retention strategies for participation (e.g., special events, incentives)

I. EVALUATION AND ESIS (Even Start Information System) *(project director)*

Local evaluation activities: staff involved, frequency and type of information collected

Data collection for ESIS forms: Forms A & B -- who collects the information and completes the form; Forms C & D -- who collects intake data; how data are collected; who tracks participation data; how are data summarized and entered into Form D

Appropriateness of ESIS with tribal projects: content of ESIS forms, special issues or items that are particularly difficult or not applicable for tribal projects.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

J. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS *(everyone)*

Perceived impact on families: definition and measurement of success, most important program effects, effects on children, parents, families

Program features most important to its success

Challenges faced by project, unique challenges of serving American Indian population, future challenges anticipated by program

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR TRIBAL EVEN START SITE VISITS

EVEN START PROJECT SITE: _____

DATE: _____

PROGRAM ACTIVITY _____

When is the activity taking place: day and time

Where is the activity taking place: describe the building (on-site or off-site), describe the room and the atmosphere

Who is leading the activity: Even Start staff or community service provider

Who are the participants: number, adults or children, male or female, age ranges, unique characteristics, Even Start family members only and/or community or non-Even Start family members

What is the program activity: describe what is happening during the activity, what is being presented or discussed, what is the level of participation, how is the activity being received by the participants, are any materials being distributed to the participants, are visual aids being used, is this a regularly scheduled activity with regular participants or is it a one-time activity

Conclusion of activity: how long did the activity last, how did it end